ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

A PAT on the back for his special guest in astonishing red from US President Bush after formal arrival rites in the White House South Lawn.

Finn case no SARS; RP passes 20-day test

Story on Page A6

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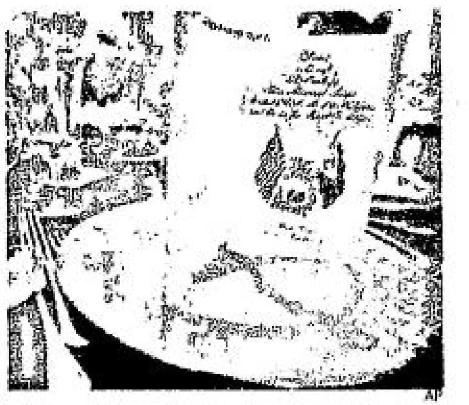


AP

PLACE setting at state dinner resplendent.

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Wednesday, May 21, 2003 ★★ 64 pages / 6 sections / vol. 18 / no. 162 P15 website: www.inq7.net

US names RP major ally

Bush accepts GMA invitation to visit RP

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

WASHINGTON (via PLDT)—She has earned what no other Philippine president has achieved: making the country a special non-North Atlantic Treaty Organization ally of the United States. Nato is an alliance of 19 European and North American countries committed to the collective defense of member countries.

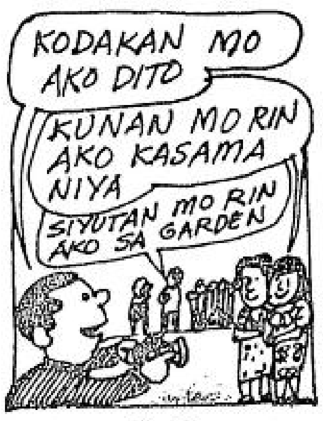
"That puts the Philippines right up there with Australia, Egypt, Israel ... which means it will be easier for us to answer questions on military equipment and to provide parts and equipment to make sure that the defense capabilities of the Philippine military are modern, and the choppers fly and are maintained. When the President orders up a strike, it happens quickly," US President George W. Bush told President Macapagal-Arroyo at their joint press conference in the East Room of the White House.

Bush described RP-US relations in the first 14 hours of Ms. Macapagal's three-day state visit here as "stronger today than at any time in our recent history."

Further cementing close ties between the two allies was Bush's announcement that he was accepting Ms Macapagal's invitation for him to make a reciprocal state visit to Manila in October.

The visit is to take place on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit that

US NAMES/ A21



KODAKAN MO AKO DITO
KUNAN MO RIN AKO KASAMA NIYA
SIYUTAN MO RIN AKO SA GARDEN

'Kodakan' galore at White House

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

WASHINGTON (via PLDT)—Exactly like awestruck tourists, some members of President Macapagal-Arroyo's Cabinet took pains to seize the moment.

While waiting in their designated line for the formal arrival honors to begin at the South Lawn of the White House, National Security Adviser Roilo Golez and Energy Secretary Vince Perez were seen handing digital cameras to Mai-Mai Jimenez, the President's adviser on special projects, for her to take their pictures.

The two men posed with

KODAKAN/ A20

ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

A MOST attentive US President Bush lights up the smile of President Macapagal. (Below) At the White House state dining room, the dinner for Ms Macapagal is strictly VIP, grand but intimate and personalized for 130 guests, among them 13 Filipinos led by Senate President and Mrs. Franklin Drilon and House Speaker and Mrs. Jose de Venecia. *(More pictures on Pages A20, A21, A22.)*

State dinner fit for royalty

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

WASHINGTON (via PLDT)—The White House pulled out all the stops for President Macapagal-Arroyo, the first Asian leader to be so honored by the Bush presidency.

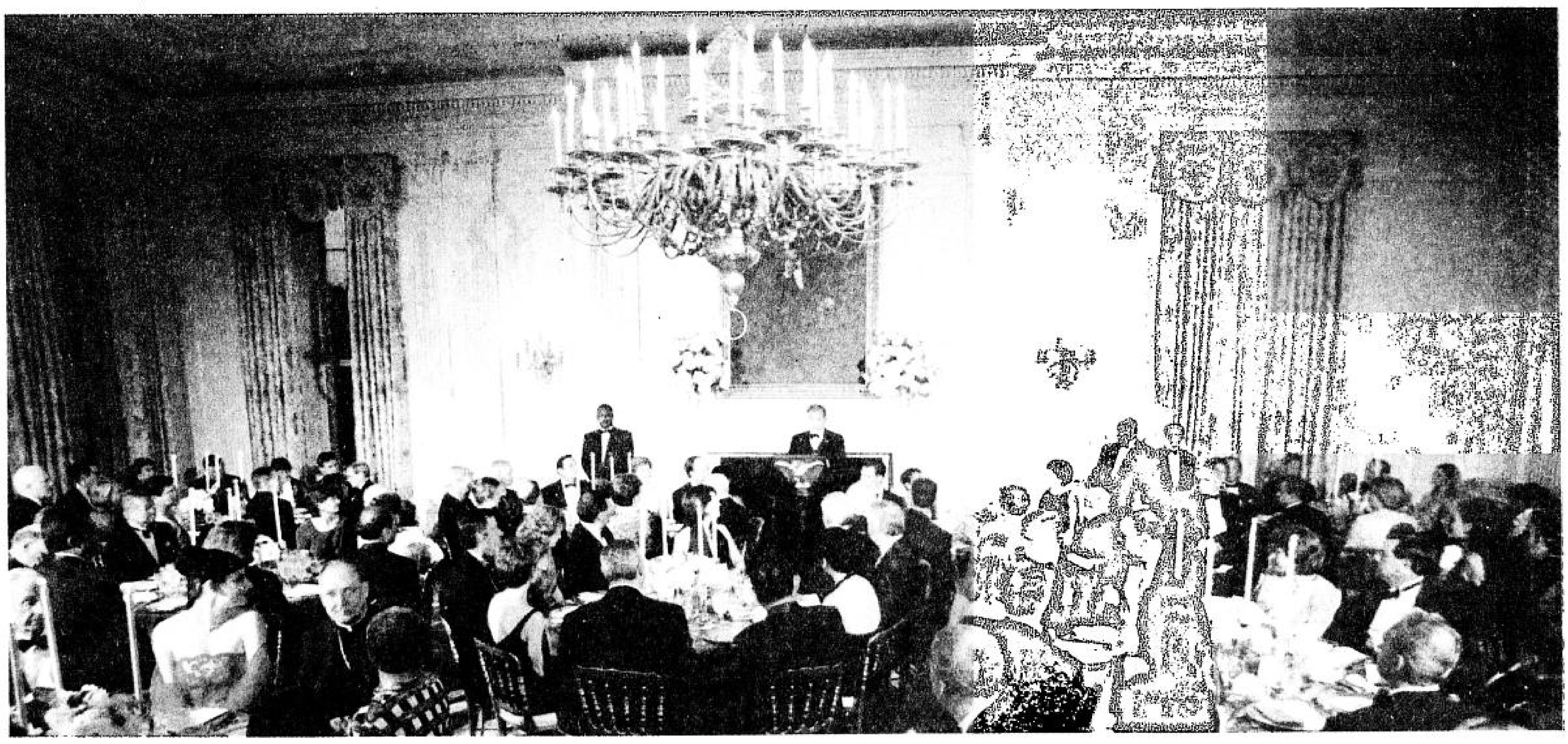
It took out its finest china, invited a renowned mezzo-soprano and an orchestra to provide music, and served the best food for the rare state dinner that US President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush hosted for Ms Macapagal and her husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo.

The state dinner, planned by the White House for three months, was only the second for a Philippine leader in 14 years. President George Bush, the incumbent's father, also hosted a state dinner for the only other Philippine woman president, Corazon Aquino, on Nov. 9, 1989.

At the start of her three-day state visit on Monday, an elaborate and colorful arrival ceremony complete with a 21-gun salute and a parade of honor guard was also provided for Ms Macapagal at the South Lawn of the White House.

At promptly 7 p.m. on that day, Bush and his wife came out of the White House to welcome Ms Macapagal, who emerged from a black limousine dressed in a

STATE/ A21



'If they can convert our roads into gold...'

MILF rebels yesterday welcomed US President George W. Bush's offer of financial and political assistance to end their decades-old insurgency, but said they had no choice but to fight a continuing military offensive.

"The MILF always welcomes all development assistance," spokesperson Eid Kabalu told the Associated Press. "If they can convert our roads into gold, why not?"

Kabalu said the Moro Islamic Liberation Front agreed with Bush about renouncing the use of terror and force, saying: "We are not engaged in terrorist activities, we are only defending ourselves in the face of the onslaught against us."

He said the MILF had pursued peace with the government and has come up with several agreements, but that the process was derailed by a major military offensive in February that drove the rebels from a key camp in the Buliok complex.

Kabalu said increased US military assistance to the Armed Forces, one of the pledges Bush made in his meeting with President Macapagal-Arroyo in the Oval Office, would make little difference on the ground.

IF THEY/ A19

US, RP vow to crush Abus 'once and for all'

By Juliet Javellana

WASHINGTON (via PLDT)—The United States and the Philippines recommitted themselves on Monday to a joint military effort to stamp out the Abu Sayyaf bandit group "once and for all."

Hosting President Macapagal-Arroyo at the White House, US President George W. Bush also said Washington wanted to back renewed peace talks between the

US, RP/ A19

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Second FRONT PAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming widespread rains over Eastern Visayas. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/05/21/03

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

40,000 affected by Maguindanao floods

COTABATO CITY—Close to 40,000 people in seven towns of Maguindanao have been affected by heavy floods caused by six days of continuous rains, the civil defense office here said.

Lita Enok, director of office of civil defense for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, identified the towns as Shariff Aguak, Kabuntalan, Pagalungan, SK Pendatun, Datu Piang, Sultan sa Barongis and Datu Piang.

No one was reported killed.

"The people were affected but not displaced," Enok said, adding that there have been no evacuations because of the floods.

Enok said she was more concerned about the situation of residents who have been displaced by the armed conflict between government troops and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the province.

Enok said the evacuees are living under very difficult circumstances but the the floods were making their lives even harder.

"Evacuation camps have been flooded with heavy rains, I cannot imagine their situation right now," she said.

Thousands of displaced families are housed in some 11 evacuation sites in Pagalungan, Maguindanao, and the refugees have refused to move out of the centers after seeing more soldiers pouring into the province, she said.

"The coming of trucks loaded with soldiers is an indication that war is far from over in our land," said Bainudin Saliling, an evacuee from Pikit, North Cotabato.

The Department of Agriculture has yet to report on the extent of damage to crops brought about by the floods.

Cotabato City officials are taking steps to ensure that water from the Liguasan Marsh would not overflow into the city's lowlying areas. *Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Joker won't probe top Palace officials

BECAUSE the purported evidence would be inadmissible in court, the Senate blue ribbon committee has declined to investigate allegations that some Malacañang aides allegedly tried to extort money from a German company involved in the construction of the controversial Terminal 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Sen. Joker Arroyo, chair of the blue ribbon committee, said yesterday his committee cannot undertake an investigation into the allegations of bribery and influence peddling contained in a series of articles that appeared in the Daily Tribune newspaper from May 7 to 12.

In a privileged speech on May 7, opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara asked that the Senate launch an inquiry into the allegations contained in the newspaper report.

The newspaper claimed it had acquired a tape recording of a conversation in which officials of Fraport, the German investor company, were allegedly asked to cough up P3 billion by some Palace aides who promised to fix the legal problems of the airport terminal project in exchange.

In a memorandum to Senate President Franklin Drilon, Arroyo said that "law and jurisprudence prevents the blue ribbon committee from admitting the recorded conversations into evidence because admittedly they were, according to the source of the tape, illegally obtained."

ARROYO

The Tribune editor in chief, Ninez Cacho-Olivarez, has reportedly admitted that the taped conversation, purportedly between Fraport's German lawyer, two unidentified American lawyers and a Fraport official, was illegally recorded.

"Were the committee to proceed, it would violate the law which says in clear and prohibitory terms that illegal wire taps 'shall be inadmissible in any judicial, quasi-judicial, legislative or administrative proceedings,'" Arroyo said in his May 20 letter to Drilon.

Opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said, however, that Arroyo could still investigate because there might be other evidence that can be used.

He suggested that Arroyo inhibit himself from the investigation and allow the vice chair of the blue ribbon committee to take over.

The blue ribbon committee has no vice chair. *Christine O. Avendaño*

Cha-cha dead in Senate; John O blames Angara

OPPOSITION Sen. John Osmeña yesterday conceded that the Charter change proposal was "dead in the water" where the Senate was concerned and blamed Sen. Edgardo Angara for it.

Osmeña said he agreed with Majority Leader Loren Legarda's statement but believed it was because "the captain has jumped ship."

Angara left for the United States last week.

Legarda said the other day that the Charter change bid in the Senate was as good as dead because Congress has run out of time to tackle the relevant resolutions as the legislature is set to adjourn in three weeks.

Legarda said that up to now, the Senate committee on constitutional amendments chaired by Angara has yet to wrap up public hearings on the Charter change proposals.

Osmeña said Angara had "abandoned" him and other senators who were in favor of Congress constituting itself into a constituent assembly to tackle amendments to the Constitution.

"He (Angara) has swam ashore to the safety of the United States, leaving us twisting in the wind," Osmeña said in an extemporaneous privileged speech.

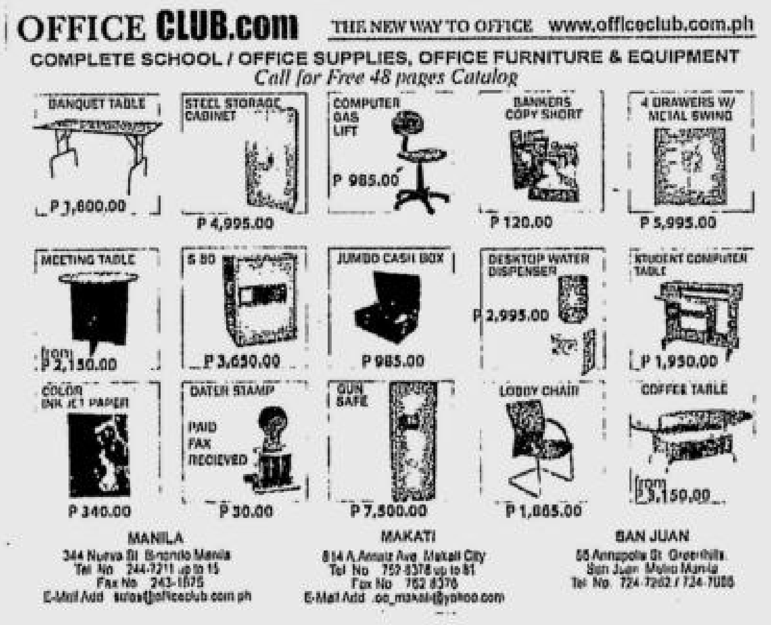
Osmeña said that he knew Angara had left for the US for the wedding of a relative last week. But he said that when he checked yesterday he found that Angara had bought "open-dated" return air ticket.

This indicated that Angara was "not planning to come home in the next week and even before the adjournment of Congress," according to Osmeña.

"I don't want to use terms that are offensive but I think he (Angara) should have at least called us instead of leaving us in the lurch," Osmeña said.

"I feel betrayed that after all our efforts, I think we have to agree with the majority leader that Cha-cha is dead in the Senate," he said.

Osmeña said that until the other day he was still hopeful that the Charter change proposals could still be approved and even thought of calling on Eraño Manalo, Iglesia ni Cristo spiritual leader, after the politically influential religious group announced its opposition to amending the Charter now. *Christine Avendaño*



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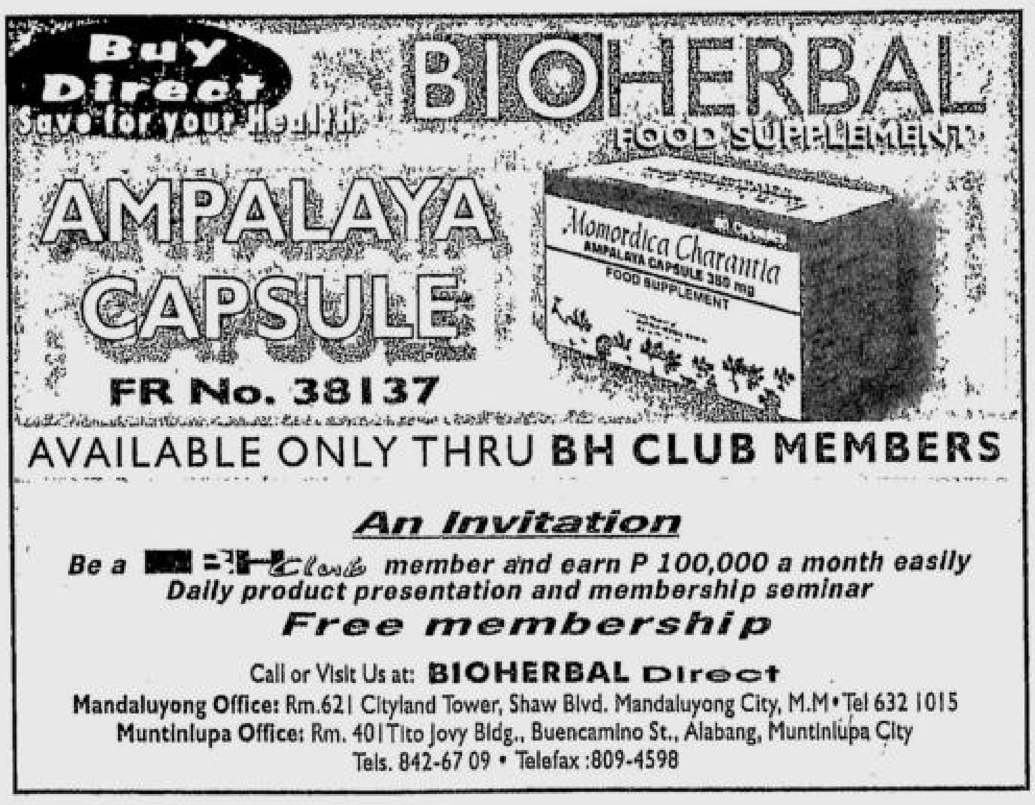

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Doy Laurel gets another chance

THE SANDIGANBAYAN yesterday gave former Vice President Salvador "Doy" Laurel a chance to still challenge the Office of the Ombudsman over the graft case he now faces in connection with the controversial Centennial Expo project.

The court allowed Laurel to file a motion for reconsideration before the Ombudsman, a "statutory right" which the court said Laurel was "deprived" of when graft investigators filed the case last March 21.

The ruling rendered tentative Laurel's scheduled arraignment on June 27. It may not push through if the Ombudsman's reinvestigation of the case is not yet finished by then.

The Sandiganbayan's 5th Division noted that the case was filed on the very same day Laurel received his copy of the Ombudsman's resolution approving the filing. Under such circumstances, Laurel is still entitled to file a motion for reconsideration, the court ruled.

The ex-Vice President is accused of illegally jacking up the cost of the Freedom Ring in Pampanga from P248 million to P1.1 billion without a proper public bidding. The Ring was one of the projects of the Ramos administration for the 1998 Philippine Centennial.

He was charged in his capacity as then chair of the National Centennial Commission and the Philippine Centennial Exposition Corp. (Expocorp).

Espiritu appointed envoy to UK

By Christine O. Avendaño

MALACAÑANG has appointed former Finance Secretary Edgardo Espiritu as ambassador to the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland.

The foreign affairs committee of the Commission on Appointments began yesterday deliberations on the appointments of Espiritu and eight other officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Southern Leyte Rep. Aniceto Saludo, a member of the CA foreign affairs committee, said that the body will continue with its hearings next week.

Saludo said that so far there were no oppositors to the appointment of Espiritu, a former finance secretary in the administration of deposed President Joseph Estrada. He was appointed to the position last month, according to Saludo.

Meanwhile, Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. called the attention of the commission on the recent appointment and induction by President Macapagal-Arroyo of some military generals, including military intelligence chief and now Gen. Victor Corpus.

"My position is that the President violated the Constitution because she cannot appoint a person from the rank of colonel to become general while Congress is in session," Pimentel told reporters.

The senator said that the President's appointment does not take effect until after the Commission on Appointments has acted on the appointments.

But he said that somebody is making it appear that the appointments were made when Congress was not in session.

"But this is rather very suspicious, if I would say because if they were appointed before Congress was in session, then they would have already taken their oath upon their appointment."

He acknowledged that what the President did was an impeachable offense.

"The CA should take it up and protect its integrity," Pimentel said.

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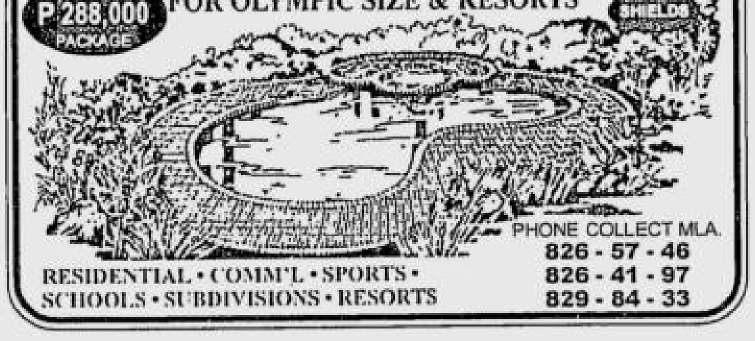

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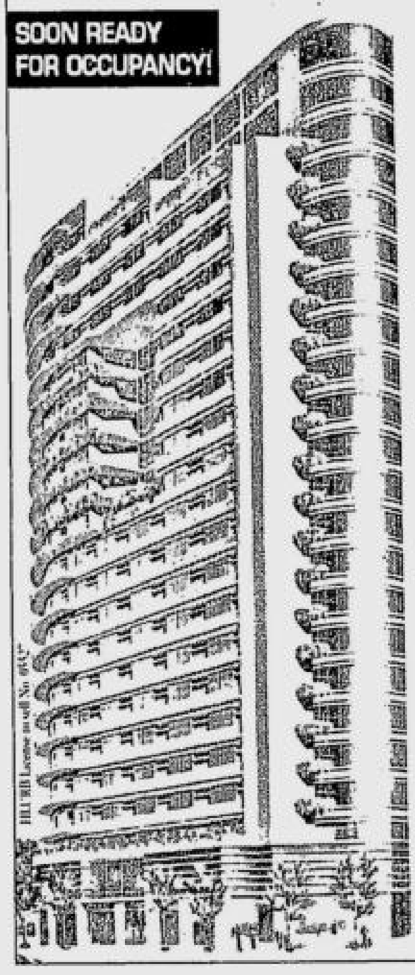

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Winning bidder vows to purge voters' list

THE WINNING bidder of the P1.2-billion validation phase of the Comelec's election modernization program has vowed to cleanse the country's list of 36 million registered voters in 70 days.

The Philippine unit of the French-based Sagem said its technology is capable of meeting the Comelec's goal of finishing the voters' list validation by mid-December.

In a "kick-off meeting" with Comelec officials and the media to demonstrate its software, Sagem said the firm would be installing data capture stations (DTS) in July to start the validation process.

Sagem project director Laurent Boni said the mobile DTS would start capturing the voters' lists in all municipalities and cities from July to September.

From mid-September up to December, the machines will start the verification process to separate double registrants, fictitious voters and other dubious characters in the voters' list.

Boni said the data base to be provided by Sagem can store demographic information of up to 38 million people.

Only two people would be needed to operate the DTS, one interviewer and another operator of the machines, which include a digital camera.

Comelec to probe Isabela polls

By Blanche S. Rivera

IRKED by complaints on the Isabela elections, Commission on Elections chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. yesterday ordered the investigation of Comelec personnel involved in the controversial polls.

The Comelec formed a committee to investigate the allegations of Ilagan Bishop Sergio Utleg who said that there was "massive vote padding" in some towns, and that the canvassers failed to protect the ballots.

Representatives of the poll watchdog group Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting were also barred from witnessing the canvassing, Utleg said in a pastoral letter.

Comelec directors Jose Balbuena and Adolfo Ibañez, and Abalos' chief of staff Jaime Paz, were appointed to look into the allegations.

Abalos said he wanted to have "an impartial, speedy investigation on reports of various poll anomalies."

The committee was given up to June 10 to complete its probe and submit the recommendations to Abalos.

"The Comelec leadership will not countenance any irregularities especially if done by our own people," Abalos said.

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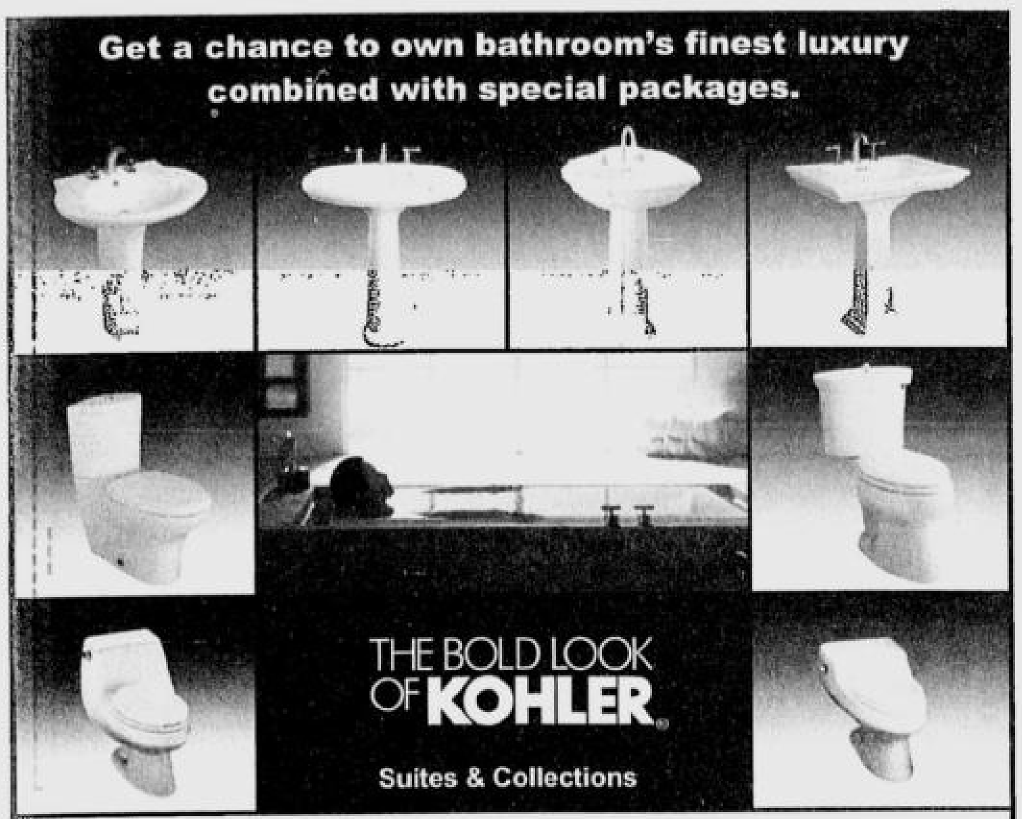

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Manila Water

Water Interruption Notice

Emergency interruption in portions of Quezon City, San Juan, Mandaluyong, Pasig, Makati and Manila

In the interest of public safety, Manila Water is now conducting emergency work on a large watermain in Quezon City which will cause temporary water service interruption in portions of Quezón City, San Juan, Mandaluyong, Pasig, Makati and Manila. Water service disruptions began 10:00 pm, Monday, May 19, 2003. Work will be done to fully isolate a portion of a 152.5 mm-in-diameter line along Bignay St., Project 2, Quezon City and E. Rodriguez so retrieval operation for the body of accident victim can begin.

The following areas will have no water: Bgy. Kalusugan, Damayang Lagi, Kristong Hari, portion of Mariana and Pinagkaisahan.

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San Juan: Horseshoe, Greenhills, Ortigas Center, Valencia, Pasadena, Barangay Onse, Little Baguio, Sta. Lucia, Corazon De Jesus, Isabelita, Tibagan, Maytunas, Kabayanan, Addition Hills, Batis, San Perfecto, Progreso, Rivera, Balon Bato, and Ermitano.

Mandaluyong City: Hagdang Bato, Daang Bakal, Bagong Silang, Harapin ang Bukas, Poblacion, Namayan, Old Zañiga, New Zañiga, Mauway, Malamig, Highway Hills, Addition Hills, Plainview, Mabini, J. Rizal, Vergara and Pag-asa.

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Manila Water is currently making network adjustments to try to lessen the number of affected areas. Tankering will be done to the affected areas as well as the installation of static tanks. For the latest update on the interruption, please call our **Call Center Hotline 1627.** *Inquirer--May 21, 2003*

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Plot to kill BIR a cover-up for ₱38-B mess says solon

THE FORMER commissioner of the Bureau of Internal Revenue and a pro-US lobby group are behind a plot to abolish the BIR to cover up for the large-scale tax evasion and profiteering that have defrauded government of at least P38 billion, Rep. Aniceto Saludo said yesterday.

In a privilege speech, Saludo said the "insidious conspiracy" is engineered by former BIR commissioner Rene Bañez and the lobby group Agile (Accelerating Growth, Investment and Liberalization with Equity) which had claimed in its website being "the real policy makers" in the Philippines.

Saludo said Bañez was working for his former employer, the Metro Pacific-PLDT group of the Salim family of Indonesia, and their other "co-conspirators," the Department of Finance, the Department of Budget Management and the National Treasury.

The Southern Leyte congressman said the ordinary and honest BIR employees are being made to account for the failures of their leaders, specifically Bañez, who granted tax breaks in billions of pesos to Metro Pacific Group, owner and developer of the Fort Bonifacio Global City project in Taguig.

The billion-peso tax breaks given to Metro Pacific, a conglomerate which includes telecommunications giant PLDT, Smart, Piltel, Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. and Negros Navigation, contributed greatly to the biggest tax collection shortfall by any BIR commissioner, Saludo said.

Record shortfall

This shortfall, in turn, contributed greatly to a record-breaking budget deficit by the national government.

Saludo said that during his term as BIR commissioner, Bañez exempted Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. from a P1.89 billion documentary tax liability on the purchase of land from the government. He passed this liability on to the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA), for which the government paid P2.67 billion, including increments.

Saludo said the Court of Tax Appeals, however, had declared with finality that Metro Pacific was liable for the documentary stamp tax and ordered it to pay the government the amount.

Bañez, Saludo said, allowed Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. an erroneous P5.68 billion tax refund on its inventory of raw land acquired from government. He also caused the government P28.8 billion revenue loss arising from the reduction, initiated and promulgated by the former commissioner himself, of the zonal valuation of land in Fort Bonifacio Global City.

Saludo explained that when the Ramos administration bided out the Fort Bonifacio property, the Metro Pacific Group won by offering the highest bid of P33,000 per square meter for the raw land.

After billions of pesos were invested for land development and construction of facilities including high-rise buildings, the zonal valuation for the same property increased to P100,000 per square meter.

Saludo said that during Bañez' "short-lived and disastrous" stint at the BIR, the same property's zonal valuation was drastically reduced to only P35,000 per square meter.

The revenue loss from this single act of reducing Fort Bonifacio Global City's zonal valuation cost the government at least P28.8 billion in revenue losses, excluding interests and other penalty charges, Saludo said.

Tax evasion scheme

The congressman also said Bañez strategized, engineered and even pushed personally billions of pesos worth of tax evasion schemes, which included the issuance of unnumbered and unaccounted BIR rulings granting tax exemptions and tax reductions to favor select taxpayers who belong to the Makati Business Club.

Saludo condemned an insidious multimillion-peso media blitz, topped by a well financed advertising campaign, that had been launched by the conspirators to pressure Congress into the passing the proposed measure that would demolish the BIR, create a new revenue authority and eventually privatize the system for tax collections.

He explained that the campaign strategy was geared toward misleading and exploiting the President to push for the new revenue authority called the Nara.

Saludo said the campaign is headed by some personalities in civil society, including those from the well-funded "Walang Kukurap" organization set up by Alex Magno, a so-called civil society leader and now a member of the board of directors of the Development Bank of the Philippines, and a media handler named Mawi Terrado.

Saludo called for a congressional into anomalies that have defrauded the government of at least P38 billion.

He also called on the BIR to immediately collect from Metro Pacific Corp. the P1.8 billion in documentary stamp tax including interest costs and penalties and for the National Treasury to return the amount to the BCDA.

He also asked the present BIR leadership to account for all the rulings made by Bañez favoring select Makati Business Club firms with tax exemptions and reductions and to nullify all the unnumbered rulings.

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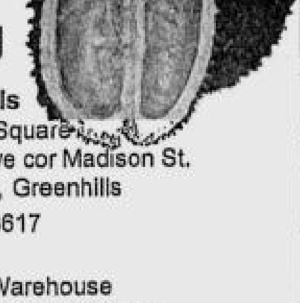

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Relief seen for death row minors

By Philip C. Tubeza

SIX death row convicts could escape the ultimate penalty of lethal injection if it is determined by the courts that they were minors when they committed the crimes of which they were convicted.

The Supreme Court has ordered the Muntinlupa Regional Trial Court to review the cases of the six inmates who were alleged to have been minors at the time of the offense.

In an en banc resolution on April 1, the SC ordered the lower court to determine the real age of Ramon R. Nicodemus, Saturani B. Panggayong, Roger M. Pagsibigan, Larina R. Perpiñan, Elmer R. Butal and Christopher V. Padua.

The six were all convicted of capital crimes which the SC order did not specify.

Being a minor is a "privileged mitigating circumstance" under the law and the penalty imposed would be reduced if it is proven that they were under 18 years when they committed the crimes.

Under the Revised Penal Code, trial courts should impose a "discretionary penalty," but always lower by at least two degrees than that prescribed by law when the offender is under 15 but over nine years old.

In cases when the offender is over 15 and under 18 years, the penal code says that the penalty next lower than the one prescribed by law should be imposed.

The six convicts were among the 10 alleged youthful offenders that the SC ordered transferred last year from death row to the national penitentiary's medium security compound when the time came to review their appeal against their conviction.

The high court.earlier reduced the death sentence of the three other offenders—Alfredo T. Alvero, Alfredo G. Baroy and Anthony A. Manguerra—to life imprisonment. The case of Ronald J. Braga, the fourth offender, has already been referred to the Muntinlupa RTC.

The SC began looking into the the convicts' cases in response to a letter about their plight from Ma. Victoria Diaz, a program officer of the Philippine Jesuit Prison Service.

Diaz had submitted evidence that included the birth certificates of the convicts to prove that they were minors.

The SC said that the death row was not a place for youthful offenders.

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Reyes pals remain anonymous

THE SO-CALLED "friends" of Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes who financed his infomercials continue to remain anonymous as the defense department's Office of Civil Defense (OCD) has refused to divulge their names.

OCD administrator Melchor Rosales yesterday said only Reyes himself can reveal the names of the financiers.

The infomercials portray Reyes as a "take-charge" guy telling viewers what to do when fires or disasters strike.

They were supposedly sponsored by the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC), a government agency under the OCD.

"The (funds for the) infomercials did not come from government. They were funded by the institutional partners of the NDCC based on solicitations," Rosales said.

"I am not at liberty to give this (information) out. That's why I said I am going to wait for the chair (Reyes) to answer this," he said.

The defense secretary is in the US with President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Reyes himself was vague about who financed the infomercials when he talked to INQUIRER editors and columnists last week.

He merely said that "friends" had financed them.

Rosales was addressing reports suggesting that government funds were being used to build up the image of Reyes who is said to be seeking higher elective office in 2004.

This was denied by Rosales who maintained that the funds for the production of the infomercials and the radio and TV spots did not come from the NDCC.

The spots, according to a defense official, were given to the NDCC by private companies which paid for the air time. *Martin P. Marfil*

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Finn case no SARS; RP passes 20-day test

By Armand Nocum and Christine Avendaño

THE PHILIPPINES yesterday cleared the last obstacle to its getting off the international list of SARS-affected countries.

Dr. Jean Marc Olivé, World Health Organization representative to the Philippines, said test results on the 27-year-old Finn, who was feared to have contracted SARS in the Philippines and who fell ill hours after arriving in Finland on May 14, yielded negative of the SARS virus.

"We just received a message that . . . tests done on his stool samples . . . were negative for coronavirus," Olivé said in a telephone interview with the INQUIRER.

Olivé said the Finn was "responding very well to antibiotics."

SARS, which is caused by a virus, cannot be treated with antibiotics.

Olivé said he did not see any impediment to the Philippines being removed from the WHO list of SARS-affected countries.

Olivé said he had been doing his best to ensure that by today or tomorrow, the WHO would have issued a declaration that the Philippines is SARS-free.

The WHO requires that there be no SARS infection in an area for 20 consecutive days before it removes that country from its list.

Yesterday marked the 20th day the Philippines has had no new reported case of local transmission.

In an interview with reporters, Dr. Maria Consorcia Quizon, head of the National Epidemiology Center, said Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit had brought the country's request for de-listing to WHO officials in Geneva.

Quizon quoted Dayrit as saying that "WHO officials in Geneva are amenable to removing the Philippines from the list."

Dayrit is in Geneva to attend the WHO's annual general assembly.

In a message sent to the INQUIRER last night, Dayrit said that the Philippines is scheduled to be delisted today.

OLIVÉ: The tests were negative.

Where's ₱1 billion?

BUT EVEN as health officials sought to get the Philippines off the WHO list, a Senate hearing was told yesterday that government agencies had yet to get hold of the P1-billion SARS fund set aside by President Macapagal-Arroyo more than a month ago.

The director of the Bureau of Quarantine and International Surveillance, Dr. Edgardo Sabitsana, told a hearing conducted by the Senate committee on health that his agency had been using its own money to gear up its staff who are in the frontline in the fight against SARS.

Sabitsana said the fund was supposed to be released under a memorandum of agreement between the DOH and the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO). But apparently, he said, certain procedures have to be followed first before the funds could be released.

Sabitsana told reporters after the hearing that his agency had so far spent P1 million for the purchase of supplies such as protective gowns, masks and alcohol for its staff.

Some 30-40 quarantine staff are assigned at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport; others are deployed in major ports in Cebu City, Davao City, Clark, Batangas City and San Fernando, La Union.

Sabitsana said the bureau had requested the DOH to reimburse it for its expenditures. He said he was told that the first tranche of the P1 billion, amounting to P100 million, would be released in a few days.

Sabitsana said he had submitted a list of the immediate needs of the bureau, including more fuel for boats used to inspect vessels from SARS-affected countries like China, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Sen. Manuel Villar Jr., who authored one of three bills proposing amendments to the Quarantine Law, urged the government to immediately release the SARS funds.

STOP SARS ATTACK DOH OFFICIAL ADVISORY
WEDNESDAY 21 May 2003

RP BIDS FOR SARS-FREE CERTIFICATION

The Department of Health (DOH) formally requested the World Health Organization (WHO) to reclassify the status of the Philippines as a SARS-affected country after weeks went without new reported suspect cases stemming from AC, the Filipina from Canada who died of SARS last month.

"The Philippines is now ready for a reclassification as there are no other suspect SARS cases reported in the country that can be traced to AC for the past twenty (20) days", Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit announced as he called in from Geneva where he is attending the annual WHO assembly.

Dayrit said that although the DOH last week reclassified two more suspect cases as SARS, which brought the number of SARS cases in the country now to twelve (12) with 2 deaths, it would not affect its bid for status reclassification.

"These newly reclassified SARS cases are considered imported cases, having come from Taipei and Singapore. So, technically it cannot affect our efforts for reclassification", the health chief noted.

Dayrit also reiterated its call to all doctors to report all suspect cases for proper management and treatment following the DOH strategy of identification, isolation, and containment. He added that the Philippines has an edge over other SARS-affected countries because of its efficient surveillance system and detailed contact tracing.

Question.	Answer.
How close is so-called close contact in SARS transmission? My family lives near the San Lazaro Hospital where SARS patients are said to be confined. We're afraid that we too might get the disease.	SARS is spread primarily by close person-to-person contact. Close contact might occur when people live together in the same household or if someone is providing care to a SARS patient. Examples include kissing or embracing, sharing eating or drinking utensils, close conversation (within 3 feet), physical examination, and any other direct physical contact between people. Close contact does not include activities such as walking by a person or sitting across a waiting room or office for a brief period of time. Like in many infectious diseases, you can prevent SARS by frequent hand washing with soap and water or use of alcohol-based hand rubs. In addition, you should avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unclean hands and encourage people around to cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.

Reported SARS cases in the Country
(March 17 - May 20, 2003)

SARS suspects:	
total cumulative admission	84
total discharged	79
presently admitted (May 15, 2003)	5
SARS cases	12
SARS deaths	2
SARS Recovered/Cured	8

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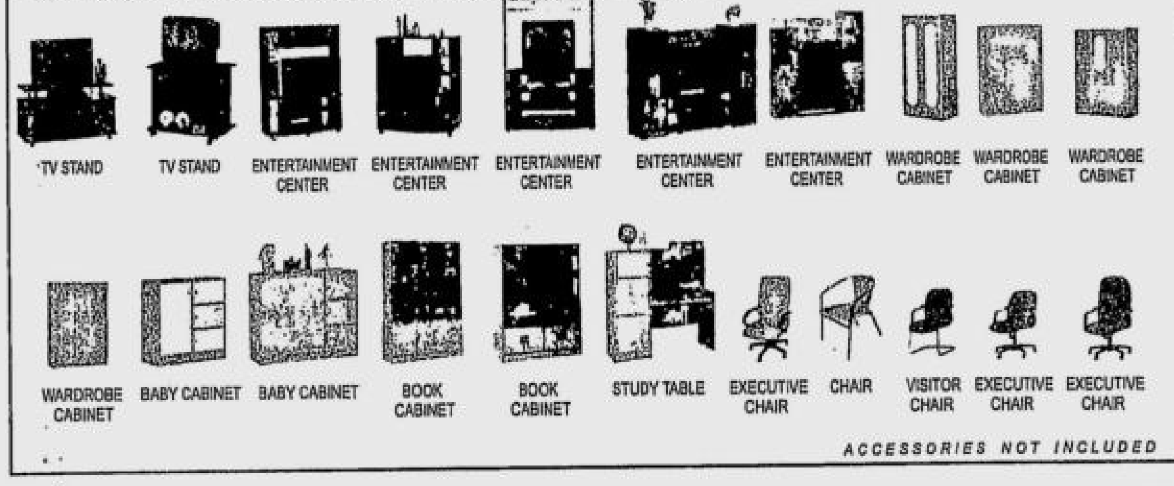

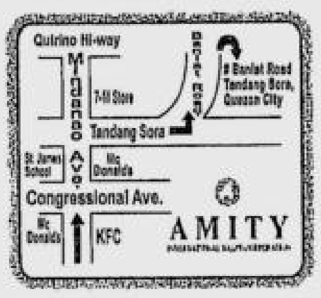

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SAVE THIS AD

Hunger strikers end protest vs Bt corn today

THE LAST of the hunger strikers protesting the commercial propagation of the genetically engineered Bt corn will lift their 30-day fast today even as they warned the Department of Agriculture of future "liabilities" as farmers are already starting to plant the controversial pest-resistant crop.

With the two officials—President Macapagal Arroyo and Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo—authorized to order a stop to the sale and planting of the Bt corn out of the country, hunger strike leader Roberto Verzola said a moratorium was now out of the question.

In any case, more than just a moratorium would be needed, he said.

"There is now liability involved because the poison is now being spread," said Verzola, one of the four hunger protesters remaining of the original nine that set out to dramatize their opposition to Bt corn outside the DA compound on April 22.

Verzola said the government could have stopped the spread of the Bt corn at its source while the scientific community was still debating the issue of genetically engineered crops.

But now the DA will have to go to the rural areas to uproot the Bt corn plants should the protesters be proven right, he said.

Still looking weak from weeks of refusing food, Verzola said he was ready to continue the hunger strike, but that he and the other protesters "don't want to make unnecessary sacrifices."

"We have nothing to be ashamed of. We can hold our heads up high," he said. *Gerald G. Lacuarta*

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Albay judge sacked

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE SUPREME COURT has ordered the dismissal of an Albay judge who incurred the ire of President Macapagal-Arroyo in 2001 for issuing a temporary restraining order that led to the release of 35,000 sacks of smuggled rice.

Judge Arnulfo G. Cabredo of the Tabaco City Regional Trial Court Branch 15 was dismissed for "gross ignorance of the law" when he issued the TRO that led to the escape of the MV Criston, the ship that brought the smuggled rice into the country.

Cabrador will forfeit all benefits, except for accrued leave credits, and will not be eligible for re-employment in any branch or agency of the government, including government-owned and controlled corporations.

"[The] judge's order is of the kind that erodes the public's confidence and faith in the courts. Judges are to avoid not just impropriety but even the appearance of impropriety," the high court said in its decision dated April 30.

"They must give no ground for reproach in order to promote public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary. No position exacts a greater demand for moral righteousness and uprightness than a seat in the judiciary," it added.

The high court said Cabredo had no jurisdiction over the smuggling case and had "proceeded against settled doctrine, an act constituting gross ignorance of the law."

"What is involved here is a fundamental and well-known judicial norm. If the law is so elementary, not to know it or to act if one does not know it constitutes gross ignorance of the law. Gross igorance of the law is the disregard of basic rules and settled jurisprudence. Failure to know the basic principles is an inexcusable offense. Respondent's actuation in this case is tantamount to grave misconduct," the SC said.

The President ordered the filing of charges against Cabredo on Aug. 5, 2001 after it was learned that the MV Cristo had escaped "because of the TRO."

The President was then engaged in a high-profile drive against crime.

Winston Florin, the deputy customs collector in Tabaco City, had ordered the ship seized because of the smuggled rice in September 2001.

The contraband's alleged consignees, Antonio Chua Jr. and Carlos Carillo, asked Cabredo to issue an injunction against the Bureau of Customs to stop it from detaining the shipment.

Cabredo issued the TRO on Sept. 28.

Batibot is coming

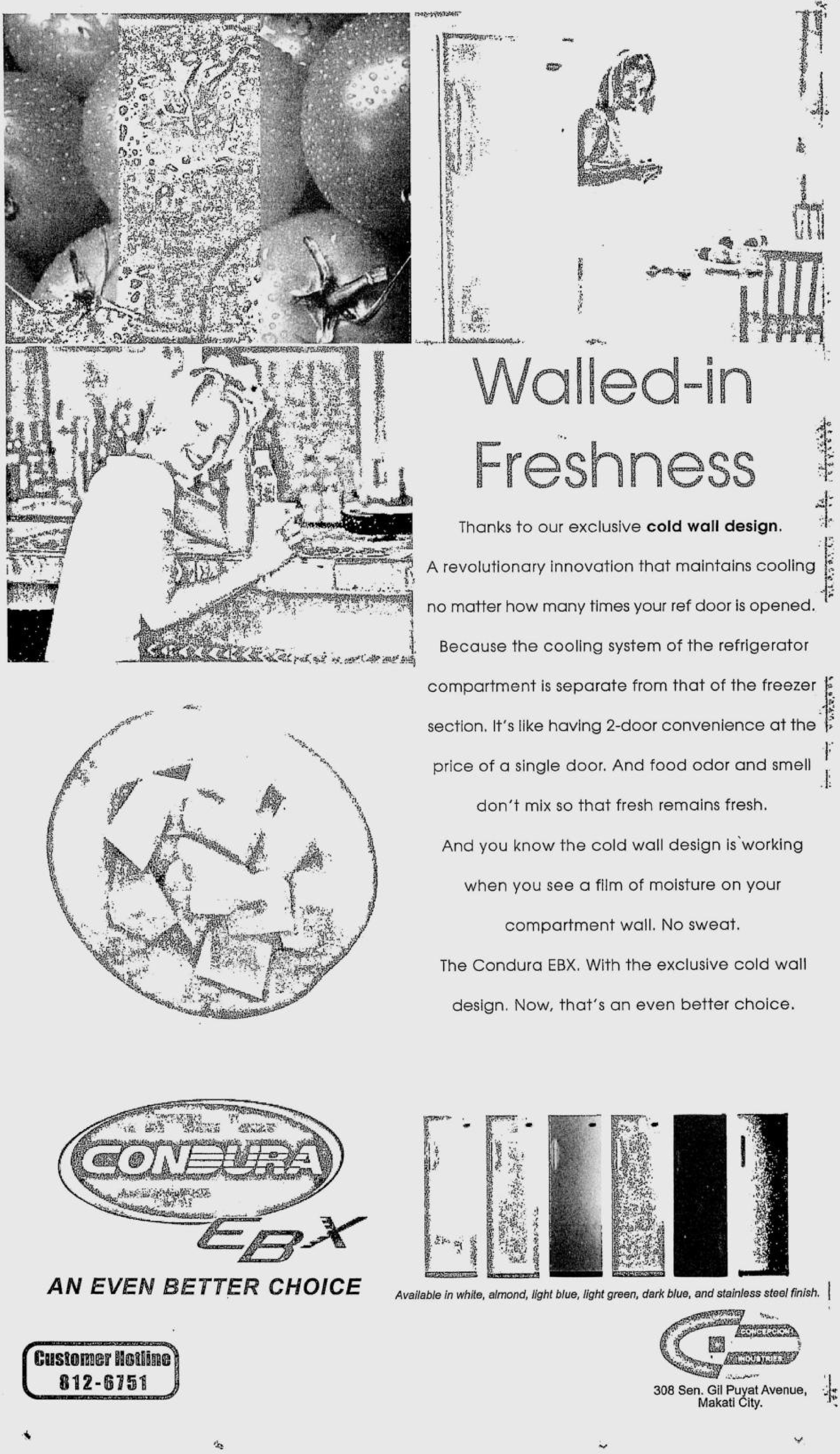
TROPICAL DEPRESSION "Batibot" has maintained its strength as it moves slowly northwestward, bringing rains and winds of 45 kph to the Samar Provinces and Sorsogon.

At 2 p.m. yesterday, "Batibot"—named after a popular children's educational show on TV—was estimated at 340 km east southeast of Borongan, Eastern Samar with maximum sustained winds of 45 kph near the center.

The Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said the storm was is forecast to "remain almost stationary."

On Thursday afternoon, Batibot will be 300 km east southeast of Borongan, Eastern Samar and 290 km east of the same area on Friday afternoon.

Storm Signal No. 1 is raised over the Samar Provinces and Sorsogon. *Gerald G. Lacuarta*



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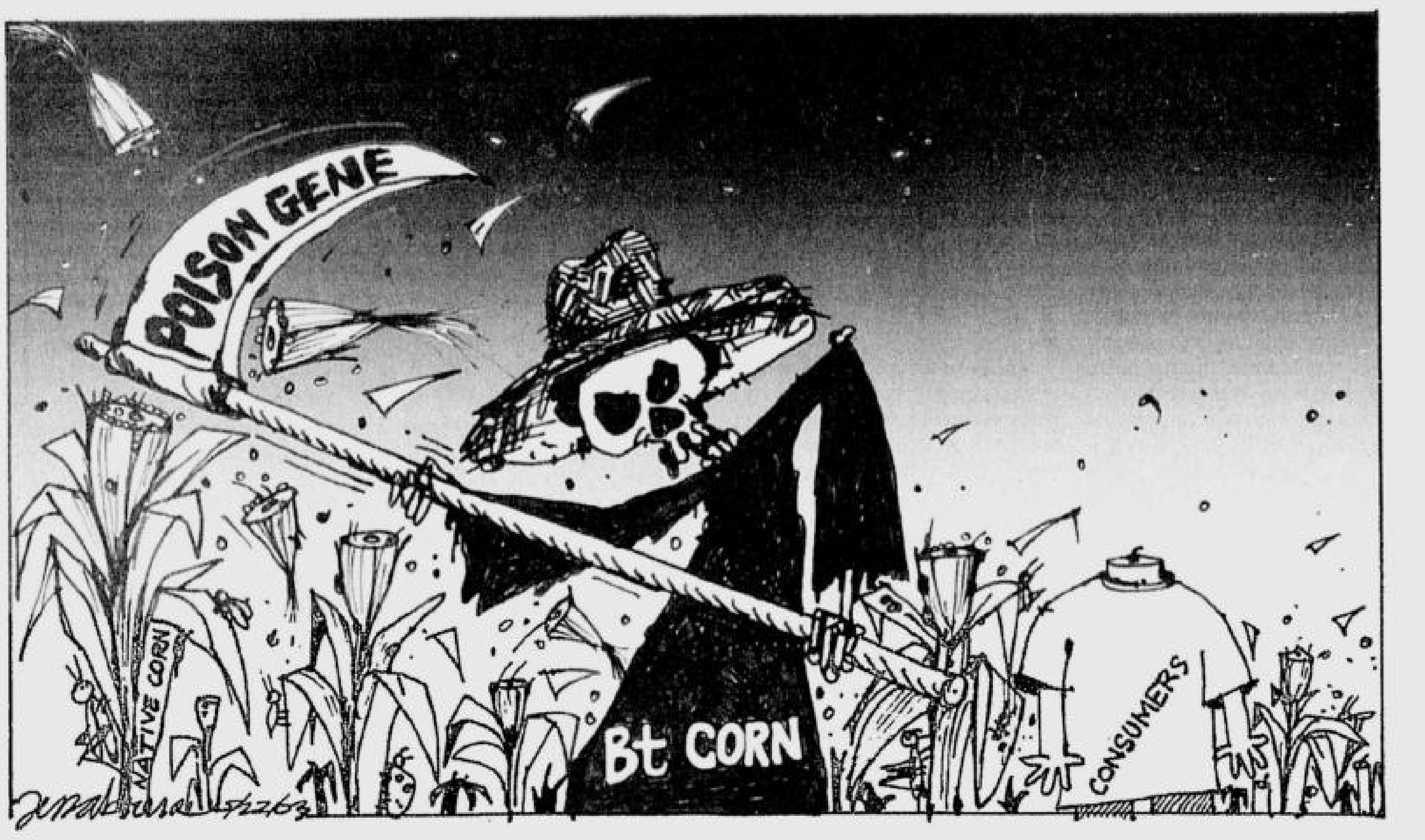


EDITORIALS

Case closed?

THE ARREST by American authorities of Nida Blanca's American husband should provide a new impetus to the solution of a case that, owing to its nature and the popularity of the victim, has preoccupied the public mind for nearly two years now.

The arrest of Roger "Rod" Lawrence Strunk in East California by US marshals, according to Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong, is a first step toward his extradition to the Philippines.

The arrest was made based on the information filed by the Department of Justice (DOJ) with the Pasig regional trial court accusing Strunk, Philip Medel and two John Does of killing the actress.

What can be gleaned from these developments is the apparent determination of the DOJ in prosecuting a case that, despite its high-profile nature, has been in limbo since Medel, Strunk's co-accused and self-confessed killer of Blanca, recanted his statement naming Strunk as the mastermind.

The recantation doused cold water on what many had thought to be a quick solution to a grisly murder. After all, the brutality of the killing and the fame of the victim should have been enough incentives for investigators to press on with dispatch. In fact, pressured by President Macapagal-Arroyo, the Philippine National Police (PNP) promised swift results and soon enough declared the case closed with the arrest of Medel.

But the arrest proved an embarrassment later for the PNP when Medel, in front of national television, went berserk and screamed that he had been tortured by the police to admit the crime and to implicate Strunk.

As a result of that incident, prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco was forced to drop Strunk from the case, giving the American the leeway to leave the Philippines early last year to be at the bedside of his cancer-stricken mother. Medel has since languished in prison as the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) tried to rebuild the case.

Now, it seems that the NBI is sticking to the PNP version of the story, with or without Medel's recantation.

Case botched?

IT is easy to see that despite Strunk's possible extradition, the case is not any closer to being closed. Strunk's defense would surely pounce on the fact that the only thread that binds him to the case is Medel's testimony, which still stands on the record as having been recanted. Moreover, it seems that Medel is not in any danger of making another 180-degree turn and recanting his recantation.

The DOJ and the NBI, of course, have put up a brave front in saying that they hold enough evidence to indict Strunk even without Medel's testimony. But it seems that for an NBI which, under the publicity-hungry leadership of Reynaldo Wycoco, has been quick to trumpet every bit of progress in its investigations, even to the point of mistakenly tagging squealers as criminals (remember the Land Bank fiasco?), the bureau has been unusually laconic and reserved about the case. In fact, it has not identified the two accomplices whom Medel mentioned in his testimony. Nor does it offer any motive to the killing.

The fact, too, that Velasco on television had virtually dismissed the complaint against Strunk when Medel recanted his confession might credibly build a case of double jeopardy against the new charge. Moreover, since state investigators have been trumpeting from day one that Strunk did it, there might be basis in his claim that he wouldn't get a fair trial here, something that would be seriously considered by the US extradition court.

The problem as always is to make the case stick. Prosecutors will definitely have a hard time doing that since, for all intents and purposes, the PNP and the NBI had botched up the case right at the start when Nida Blanca's bloodied body was recovered from the Greenhills car park. The car was washed and cleaned even before the investigators could check it for forensic clues. Even the photos of the victim's gory remains in the mortuary turned up in the tabloids, which indicated a security breach. Any Tom, Dick and Harry manic and eager for publicity might get hints from the photos to claim they had killed the actress and show convincingly how they did it. The fact that Medel was allowed to face a public hearing only for him to trash the case later should show indeed the quality of state investigative work. Remember Ador Mawanay?

The prospect of Strunk's extradition may have improved, but that doesn't mean the riddle of Nida Blanca's death is any closer to being solved.

Lacson: Abolish the pork barrel

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

IF it was left to members of Philippine media to elect the next president of this country, Sen. Panfilo Lacson would be it. For the last three Mondays, Lacson was scheduled to be the guest at the Kapihan sa Manila and during those three days, the Manila Hotel's Roma was packed with media people, though he backed off on the first two Mondays and was late on the third. People who didn't usually go to the Kapihan were there waiting, and when the clock went beyond the scheduled time, the questions were *"Darating ba* (Is he coming)?" And when he did arrive, one and a half hours late (already like a president) there was clapping of hands and some of the journalists stood up to shake hands with him. During the interview, the audience was unusually quiet, listening to every word. And when it was over, the audience again clapped and shook hands with him. This doesn't usually happen at the Kapihan.

The journalists, of course, wanted to know what he planned to do if he became president, assuming there would be an election next year. Lacson is on record as having proposed the abolition of the hated pork barrel, a proposal that is heresy to many legislators but which the press has been fighting for for decades.

For a presidential candidate who will need the help of congressmen and other politicians who benefit from the pork barrel, Lacson's proposal is like suicide, a shortcut to defeat. Does he know what he is doing?

"I know," he replied, "and if it is going to make me lose the election, so be it. But it is the right thing to do."

Well said. You'll never hear a traditional politician say those words. And that's probably what endeared Lacson to media people. Journalists like straight-talking people, not people who beat around the bush and lie and make *bola*, believing they were able to fool those "nosy" reporters but not realizing that the journalists can see through them.

But going back to that "very corrupt and corrupting system in our political institutions": the pork barrel. Do you know that for every peso that is allocated to a project, less than half, sometimes only 20 centavos, actually goes to the project, with the bulk going into the pockets of corruption? More than half of the taxpayers' money is divided among corrupt officials.

Lacson, who has made a study of the pork barrel system—and has in fact filed charges with the Ombudsman against people (some of them his own staffers) who dipped their hands into the barrel—gives a breakdown of the division of spoils:

- The lion's share—20 percent—goes to the legislator who identified the project.
- 14 percent goes to the contractor.
- 10 percent goes to the district engineer and other officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways.
- 5 to 10 percent goes to the governor or mayor.
- 2 percent goes to the barangay captain.
- 2 percent goes to the Commission on Audit official, supposedly the watchdog of the people's money.

Shares vary depending on greed, said Lacson. "Even the billboards that advertise the proponents of infrastructure projects are overpriced," he said. "Legislators who allocate funds for the purchase of medicines and other pharmaceutical products, as well as school supplies get bigger takes. By how much? Some suppliers say it is from here to eternity."

The senator said the payoffs take place in private offices or hotel rooms but sometimes shamelessly out in the open, in the hallways. The corrupt have become shameless.

"There is nothing in the pork barrel system that gives us pride," Lacson said. "There is only everything that makes us hide in shame."

The senator called for the scrapping of the pork barrel system. "It is a virus of corruption that must die," he said. "(And) there is no better time to declare its end than now when the country's budget deficit is at an alarmingly uncontrollable pace." Last year, it was P213 billion, and still rising.

The pork barrel costs the taxpayers billions of pesos every year. By giving it up, Congress will help reduce the budget deficit, Lacson said.

He said he has not used his pork barrel allocation, as did Sen. Joker Arroyo. He asked his colleagues to do the same, although he wondered why the national budget has not been reduced when his and Arroyo's allocated but unused pork amount to P400 million. Where did the money go?

If the whole Senate waives its 2003 pork barrel, P4.853 billion (P211 million per senator x 23 senators) will automatically be deducted from the 2003 national budget, Lacson said.

He thanked the chair of the Senate finance committee and some of his fellow senators who expressed support for the proposal.

"The Speaker of the House, Jose de Venecia, can equally display his statesmanship by doing the same in the Lower House," the senator said. "With more than 200 congressman, at P65 million each, that would be another P13 billion at least. Let us be the first to sacrifice for the sake of tiding us over a financial nightmare."

"I therefore call on the Senate and House of Representatives," Lacson said, "to voluntarily give up the pork."

I know what the reaction of congressmen would be. "With an election coming up, are you crazy?" they will say. *(To be continued)*

* * *

TODAY'S JOKE: The answer to the SARS outbreak is the *kalachuchi*. Boil the leaves and bark, and drink the resulting tea. If it doesn't work, use the flowers for the funeral wreath.

Scripts

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I WILL make a fearless forecast: Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will run next year. She will cite as her excuse for turning back on her word the fiction that things have changed radically since she said she would not seek a full term last December. Those things have to do with the rising scale of terrorism in the South.

Additionally, she will cite as an excuse the fact (it won't be entirely fiction) that George W. Bush wants her to remain as President of this country. She will say she has marching orders from Bush to rid this part of the world of terrorists, or more diplomatically that she has his blessings to resurrect this country's role as America's right arm in Asia.

That is the script Malacañang has been writing the past couple of weeks.

The first, the part about GMA being this country's savior from terrorists, is patent in the apparent rise in terrorist activities in the South a couple of weeks ago and GMA's subsequent order for the military, a la Bush, to rain bombs on MILF lairs. Haven't you noticed that each time GMA is about to embark on a major policy initiative, "terrorist" activities suddenly step up? Shortly before she threw her full weight behind Bush's war in Iraq, the incident in Pikit happened: A battalion of AFP troops encountered "by accident" a group of hostile MILF while presumably pursuing a band of Abu Sayyaf. Which eventually sparked a full-blown battle, which drove residents fleeing into refugee camps. That was how the MILF entered the picture. Before that, the government had confined its "anti-terrorist" propaganda to the Abu Sayyaf, which had become embarrassing at one point, the problem being how long to make the public suspend disbelief over the national security threat it posed. Before Pikit, the AFP had merely implicated the MILF as coddlers of the Abu Sayyaf.

Then on the eve of Bush's attack on Iraq, a couple of bombings happened in Davao, which gave the AFP the excuse to declare the MILF as the enemy. Although the Abu Sayyaf claimed responsibility for the bombings, the AFP, along with war freaks like Rodrigo Duterte, immediately enlarged the scope of the fray by arguing that the Abu Sayyaf could not have done it alone, it had the help of the MILF. A series of attacks on the power supply of Mindanao then followed.

This is not to say that those atrocities were wreaked by the AFP itself, although they must raise serious questions in that respect too. The suspects so far have fall guys written all over them. Could the atrocities have been the work of covert ops? It is not inconceivable.

But quite apart from that, they raise even serious questions about whether they were unprovoked. As in the Iraq war, the media have to rely nearly completely on AFP sources for their stories on the "war" in Mindanao. Easy to write "Wag the Dog" scripts in those conditions.

And then last week, on the eve of GMA's departure for the United States, the MILF again very accommodatingly attacked government troops and toppled 11 electric posts. The MILF denies the latter, saying a local politician aided by a band of Cafgus did it. Following her cue, GMA upped the ante by declaring the MILF a terrorist organization and suggesting ominously, without feeling compelled to show proof, that it had teamed up with al-Qaida to challenge the rule of Bush's Tony Blair in Asia.

Following their cue, too, the AFP, also without feeling compelled to show proof, declared ominously that the Abu Sayyaf was planning to attack American troops in this country. It did not say why or with what. As of the latest reports, the Abu Sayyaf was still devoting its energies to kidnapping people, apart from fleeing from government troops, and Malacañang was still denying Gracia Burnham's suggestion that the AFP, and not the MILF, was coddling the Abu Sayyaf.

Not the least of those who announced that the MILF had become a terrorist organization was Bobi Tiglao, who wrote an excellent series in this paper three years ago about the difference between the Abu Sayyaf and the MILF. Indeed, between the MNLF, which has become very bureaucratic, and the MILF, which had remained very ideological. The same series traced the roots of the Mindanao conflict to a history of injustice against the Moros. All this, of course, was during Erap's time, when Erap was doing to the Moros exactly what GMA is doing now. Well, not exactly—Erap never called them terrorists.

The second, the part about GMA having the White House's blessings to cling to power, is patent in the way the trip is being packaged. In the way it's being touted as the best thing that's happened to the country since Liberation. The best thing that's happened to "special relations" since Bataan and Corregidor.

I'm betting GMA will soon announce an apparent bonanza beyond our wildest dreams to come our way from being the most willing among the coalition of the willing. A bonanza that, since it exists largely in promissory form, could be jeopardized by a change of president, particularly one who does not show the same scale of subservience—or diplomatically put, depth of resolve—to see through Bush's anti-terror campaign.

The conclusion to all this is that it is in the national interest that she run again. She does not want to, particularly because she promised not to. But God and George W. Bush, who are now one and the same, want her to. The Stars and Stripes and the Red, White and Blue, who are now one and the same, are forcing her to.

The people who are writing GMA's script would really do well to attend Ricky Lee's workshop on scriptwriting. It may help to make their work a little less predictable and a little more believable.

* * *

Comments to dequiros@info.com.ph

A more balanced Mindanao agenda

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

WHEN President Macapagal-Arroyo, on the eve of her departure for the United States, stepped up the military operations in Mindanao by ordering the Armed Forces to attack "embedded terrorist cells," she was sending a message to the United States that her government had the will to help the US-led global campaign against terrorism.

This is the message that rings a bell to President George W. Bush as he prepares to reward President Macapagal for her steadfast support of the US-led war on Iraq. No matter that President Macapagal protests she is not bringing a "laundry list" to Washington, Bush is disposed to give the Philippines economic and military aid, to show to the world that it pays to be on the US side in times of its security crisis.

The military aspect of the war on the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which like the Abu Sayyaf, is now bracketed in the category of foreign terrorist organization, was further emphasized with the designation of former Executive Secretary (Gen.) Renato de Villa, as coordinator of the military, civic and political aspects of the stepped-up campaign.

This muscular pitch will not go unnoticed in the White House saturated by hawks like Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Vice President Dick Cheney and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz. It has a resonance in the Pentagon that is still high over the swift American military victory in Iraq.

It seems to me that with the military focus on Mindanao, the President is putting the Mindanao agenda high up in her priorities as she discusses the military and economic aid she expects from Washington.

I am putting in this article two arguments: first that the Mindanao agenda is the key to unlocking US aid; and second, economic aid to Mindanao, more than military action, is the turning point of reducing the level of conflict in Mindanao and of driving the MILF back to negotiations. On the second point, I would like to argue that the designation of De Villa has too much military emphasis and none at all on economic, and so, the lopsided approach provides little incentive to revive negotiations.

While the Bush administration is receptive to give aid that will strengthen the anti-terrorist flanks in Asia—it would also like to see that US money is not wasted on military action alone. Clearly the Philippine military needs significant infusions of military hardware, technology and skills to fight the MILF and the Abu Sayyaf effectively, but without an economic component this approach will require huge expenditure of resources on military operations going down the drain.

We tend to forget that civic action by the military has always been an effective component in counter-insurgency campaigns, beginning with the campaign of the Magsaysay administration that broke the back of the Huk rebellion in the 1950s. This strategy of backing military action with infrastructure building in conflict zones was successfully replicated by President Ferdinand Marcos in his first democratic term, and most recently, by the American engineering and civic action teams in the Balikatan 2 campaign, aimed at crippling the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan.

During the first Marcos presidency (1965-69), he obtained US aid as quid pro quo for sending a battalion of Philippine engineering troops to Vietnam in 1966. With the aid, Marcos organized 10 engineering battalions, which were expanded to 15 battalions in 1967. The following year, an engineering brigade was organized for Mindanao. As I wrote in my book, "The State, Economic Transformation, and Political Change in the Philippines, 1946-1972" (1992, Oxford University Press), "the battalions and their equipment were the cutting edge of the Marcos infrastructure program. They built roads, bridges, schoolhouses, and dams."

With this infrastructure program, unhindered by time-consuming public bidding in civil works projects and TROs (temporary restraining orders from the courts), Marcos built more roads and schoolhouses than all those built by all post-war administrations. This program was executed by the Armed Forces with an operations action center in Camp Aguinaldo. Marcos showed he could get things done, and many academic studies have concluded that Marcos' concentration on the "performance" theme was mainly responsible for his landslide reelection in 1969.

This model was replicated in Balikatan 2 in Basilan. While the military pursued relentlessly the Abu Sayyaf gang that kidnapped hostages at Dos Palmas, Palawan, US engineering and medical units worked in the background. They rebuilt the long-neglected road around Basilan, the air strip, built schools and set up medical centers, serving the Muslim population. These projects were established or completed within six months. Left to Filipino public works officials, the projects would have taken forever, with funds dissipated quickly.

This civic action won the hearts and minds of civilians which accounted for defections from the Abu Sayyaf and the cooperation of civilians in informing the military on the movements of the outlaws on the run. The program cost only a few million dollars. The local population was so won over that when the engineers left, they and their Muslim leaders petitioned for the retention of the American contingent.

The above models are useful in designing the economic and civic action component of US aid available to President Macapagal. This approach should appeal to President Bush who, I am sure, is not keen on pouring reward money into a bureaucratic rat hole. The only institution that can fast-track this kind of program is the Armed Forces. True, De Villa is now the coordinator. But his accent—intensified war—is the wrong approach. It is more of the same hard-line stuff.

Not quite away from it all

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

TWO giant palms towering over the coconut trees in the middle of the island give Dos Palmas Arreceffi Island Resort its name. But two events have given the resort notoriety, through no fault of its own.

But while the Abu Sayyaf operation brought the resort to its knees, leading to its temporary closure, the death of Rico Yan has, it seems, only whetted the morbid curiosity of in-house guests and day trippers alike. "Communing with the spirit of Rico Yan" was the only half-serious reply I gave when friends asked why I was traveling with my family to Dos Palmas. But having spent the last weekend there, I could well understand why the young actor, in a phone call to his mother the day before he passed away, enthused that he had just enjoyed "the best day" of his brief life.

A weekend at Dos Palmas, and it's easy for one to believe that one can indeed get away from it all, though escaping the trappings of urban life doesn't necessarily mean forsaking the comforts of civilization.

My teen-age daughter, linked, it seems, by an umbilical cord to the Internet and the TV set, chafed at the forced separation. But we, her parents, were delighted. Instead of staying up till the wee hours bonding with her "Slayers" chat group, Miya was forced to bond with the old fuddy-duddies in her life, competing in a game of Scrabble.

The next evening, having had a full, exhausting day at the beach and a nearby island, capped with an aromatherapy massage in the resort spa, we were all too pooped to even summon the energy to pick up a Scrabble tile. We were all in bed by nine. Utter bliss.

* * *

THE TROPICAL Spa, found in the last of the Garden Cottages that had been converted into an exotic Balinese-style temple to hedonism, is just one of the many surprises at Dos Palmas.

Guests too chicken to try out the free intro dive that is part of a weekend package, have the choice to opt for any one of the Spa's services: facial spa, hair and scalp therapy or aromatherapy massage. Guests are advised to reserve their slots early, since the attendants have to schedule their services.

I'd reserved the three of us—including my daughter and sister—for 2 p.m., reasoning that this would be the best time to get out of the hot sun and take in a brief afternoon nap. Polite, soft-spoken and uniformed attendants first bade us to shower before entering the sauna. We were given a cup each filled with sunflower oil, which we were instructed to slather over our bodies to protect our skin from the dry heat. By the time the attendant told us we could step out of the sauna, we all felt (and, I'm sure, looked) like lechon glistening with oil and rivulets of sweat, flushed with heat and huffing for cool air. Advised to "cool down" by sitting in small garden with cups of chilled herbal tea, we tried to keep as poised as it's humanly possible while clad in nothing but towels and slippery skin.

* * *

THEN we were led into a darkened room, suffused with the scent of incense and candles and soothing music floating in the background. The attendants inquired how much pressure we could tolerate, but after just a few minutes of kneading and massaging, I was reduced to the consistency of melting butter.

Afterward, we all agreed that the best part of the "therapy" was the face and scalp massage that smoothed out all the kinks born of tension and stress.

That morning, we were supposed to have breakfast in an "air hut," a bamboo-and-nipa structure standing in the middle of the waters off Dos Palmas, but the wind had risen, sending even the coconut trees swaying madly. Instead, we had to "make do" with a beachfront breakfast, sitting cross-legged across a low table on one of the thatched-roof wooden huts that line the beach.

Then it was time to work off the calories. The hubby and I boarded a lime-green kayak, and after stinging our arms navigating through the choppy waters in front of the beach, we finally found ourselves in the mangrove area at the rear of the island where the waters were smooth and calm. While maneuvering through the mangroves, it's possible to catch glimpses of fish flying and leaping, seagulls hovering over schools of fish, and maybe even a monitor lizard or two lurking by the muddy shore. Other guests on the way back to Dos Palmas after lunch even managed to make the acquaintance of a family of dugong or manatees.

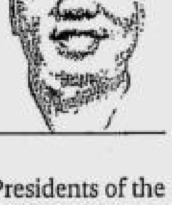
* * *

MOST anyone who visits Dos Palmas or other Palawan resorts do so to catch a glimpse of the rare marine life, Palawan being the country's "last frontier" not just in geographic terms but in terms of environmental integrity, being just about the last area in the country that's still managed to preserve its natural bounty.

And this it's done with the help of private developers, such as the family that put up Dos Palmas, who've proven that protecting and maintaining the environment is not just the socially responsible thing to do, but can also be profitable not just for their bottomline but for the populace as well.

You don't have to brave the depths or the waters, by diving or snorkeling, to fully appreciate just how beautiful and bountiful nature can be on Dos Palmas and in the seas surrounding it. My husband, an avid but often frustrated fisherman, was taken on a fishing boat to a designated area and reached our cottage exhilarated by his unexpected catch, consisting mainly of decent-sized bisugo but including one prized good-sized lapu-lapu. If only for vindicating himself to his often-skeptical family, I would guess he'd never forget Dos Palmas!

Cornejo's encyclopedia



LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

ONE of the books I have always planned to read but never got around to doing is the massive "Cornejo's Pre-war Encyclopedic Directory of the Philippines." It isn't the type of book to curl up in bed with on a cold rainy day because it is over 2,700 pages thick. A bookstand is required to browse over it comfortably. I'm ashamed to admit that in my library this valuable reference work was used primarily as a door stopper. Its secondary use was as a weapon of self-defense against would-be robbers. I can assure you that if the Cornejo encyclopedia were flung in your face, you would, literally, see stars.

Thus, I was absolutely delighted to find the book in the growing Filipiniana collection of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at Kyoto University. The book not only reminded me of home, it gave me a mild form of limited exercise since I had to carry it from the library up four flights in a nearby building to my office. Since the book is not mine, I could not use it as a door stopper, so after many years I have finally opened it, looked at its pictures and read some of its contents.

If you attempt to read the kilometric title page of the work in one breath you will turn blue: "Cornejo's Commonwealth Directory of the Philippines (Formerly: Cornejo's Philippine Directory) Awarded Gold Medal, First Prize, Philippine Carnival and Exposition, 1926. 1939 Encyclopedic Edition Commemorating the First Three Years of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines, 1935-1938; the XXXIII International Eucharistic Congress, and other historic events in the Islands from time immemorial to the present containing: A history of the Philippines, from pre-Spanish Era to date, including a compilation of important State Documents, Inaugural Addresses and Speeches of American and Filipino Statesmen; Opinion and Press Statements of Military and Naval Authorities, Politicians, Economists, Educators and Writers on Philippine Affairs; Interesting facts about the Presidents of the United States of America, from Washington to Roosevelt (F.D.), and their pictures and brief biographical data; Government of the US, and Military and Naval Rosters; a Directory of Schools, Colleges and Universities; Physicians and Hospitals in the Philippines; a list of newspapers and other publications; mining concerns and a list of Licensed Mining Engineers; Manila Classified Business Directory, Directory of Importers; Directory of Exporters; Alphabetical list of Manila Business firms, and a pictorial directory of Manila Businessmen, Biographical Directory of Leading residents of the Philippines; Ecclesiastical directory; Directory of the Officers of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines for 1935-38 and 1939-40; Philippine population as of 1939; and other Miscellaneous Information, with Road Maps of the Philippines. Compiled, Edited and Published by Miguel R. Cornejo, A.B., LL.B."

Unfortunately, no human, alone, can cope with the information explosion. The editor of an encyclopedia can be likened to Sisyphus, condemned to futile labor. Sisyphus, in the Greek underworld, is condemned to push a heavy boulder up a hill. Toward the end of the day the rock rolls downhill and he repeats the process again, every day for eternity.

I hope Cornejo was financially compensated for his labors. Perhaps there was some sense in the work for he labored on various editions from 1919 to 1939 (the last edition is what I am now using).

These days yearbooks and other reference books are quickly discarded and converted to scrap because the only ones who would care to read obsolete 64-year-old information today would be historians and antique collectors.

Just going over the Cornejo Encyclopedia made me understand and visualize the time many old folks look back to with fondness as *"pistaym"* for this was, literally, the period shortly before World War II, a nostalgic place kept in memory as "peace time." After the war, the Philippines and the Filipinos would never be the same again.

A list of obsolete Manila street names reflected the changing times. Streets mentioned in "Noli Me Tangere" like Anloague became Juan Luna, and Sacristia became Ongpin. Other examples: Alix was changed to Legarda, Aceiteros to Marcelino de Santos, Nebraska to Arquiza, Bagumbayan to P. Burgos, Bambang and Bambang Pequeño to Dart, Bang-Bang to Bambang, Callejon No. 1 to Victorino, Callejon No. 2 to Central, Caturay to Gutierrez, Echague to Padre Valderrama, Gagalangin to Juan Luna. Some heroes were erased: General Luna was changed to Manuguit, General Makabulos to Cristina, General Maxilom to Adelina, General Tinio to Paquito, Lapulapu to Nicodemus, Mabini to Torres Bugallon. The Supremo was honored by renaming Malecon as A. Bonifacio. Slowly streets named after heroes, values and significant events were renamed in honor of petty, forgettable characters.

Much can be inferred from the obscure information in a dated encyclopedia, the data used as a source for historical research and reflection on what we were, what we are and probably what we can or fail to be. But then poor Cornejo is used as a door stopper.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

My career in HRD

HIGH BLOOD

Fernando Duque

WE'D also like to know the concerns of the sixtysomething and above, what makes their blood pressure rise or makes them sit back, content that all's well with their world and with themselves. —**Ed.**

I WAS working for a multinational company when I was in my 30s and it is the job that I treasure most after reflecting on my past career in my present semi-retirement state. It was also where I stayed the longest and the most markedly dotted with milestone achievements. As the one in charge of the HRD department, my hands were full in formulating the company's personnel policies and programs. It was during my stint that the company had its first employees' publication and I was really feeling enormously satisfied because writing was my second choice when I graduated from high school, not to mention the fact that I liked it too because the course curriculum did not contain subjects on math or anything that had to do with figures. Before we launched our first company news organ, my boss, a German national who has stayed in the Philippines till now and would not like to go back to Germany, told me to put up a contest among the employees to see who could suggest the most fitting name for the publication. There were several entries and names such as Hoechst Tattler, Hoechst Gazette, Hoechst Mirror and Hoechst Trumpet were suggested but my boss liked and picked the most fitting one—Bayanihan. It was very Filipino and most apt for an employees' organ. I have vivid recollection of Chelo Banal, then a freelance writer and now editor of the INQUIRER's Lifestyle section, giving a workshop to our staff members, including myself who was chosen editor in chief of the organ, about writing and having a nose for news.

Then we had our first company sportsfest—tenpin bowling, basketball and volleyball and the annual company outing which employees liked greatly because it was held usually during summer. In my more than 12 years with the company we have gone to such places as Montemar in Bataan, Marbella in Cavite, White Sand in Olongapo City, Subic Bay and even the Laguna hot springs. We always put out a survey for the places everyone preferred for the company outing from the different departments in the company. Despite this survey process, however, some sectors always had their disagreements (typically Filipino, my boss used to mutter). And talking about going to several places for the summer outing, we were also hotel- and restaurant-hopping for venues for the annual Christmas party. I remember that we started with the Manila Peninsula Hotel. The following years we were having our Christmas soirees at Manila Garden, Intercontinental, Philippine Plaza, Silahis, Manila Hilton and Holiday Inn, not to mention country club places like Valle Verde, Polo Club and Club Filipino.

Our tenpin bowling activity was not too far off as far as the employees' enthusiasm is concerned. Personally, bowling has earned a permanent niche in my life and up to the present I am very active in tenpin bowling and have a considerable number of trophies, banners and plaques to show for my great interest in this sport. My team then was always in the forefront and we were never out of the top three teams every year aside from the individual awards I garnered. Perhaps, I was lucky to have chosen my team well because I couldn't have done it alone as it was always a team enterprise. During the week within the tournament season, it was always the topic of spirited discussion among employees in the canteen and even in their office huddles—who was the most poised in rolling the 10- or 15-pound ball, who was the most awkward, who got the best form, the surprise bowler who was not expected to roll in a good game but who, to everyone's surprise, went over the 150 or 200 mark. Basketball was one game I loved to watch but that was as far as I could venture, because when it came to being one of the players, I was the laughingstock. I always made the best excuse by saying that I joined the team just to have the free uniform and free soft drinks during every game. I remember that during the entire tournament I was fielded only once by our coach and I did not even last five minutes before I was replaced as I did not catch the ball when it was passed on to me for a possible fastbreak.

But the most noteworthy personal achievement I considered meaningful was when my proposal to the company head office in Germany was readily accepted that a conference of Asian HRD heads of Hoechst offices be held in Frankfurt, not only for a regional policy uniformity but more so for exchange of ideas and camaraderie. My boss was surprised when he got a formal letter from the head office HRD in Germany that my proposal was commendable and that they are preparing such a conference the following month. Of course, my boss had no other choice but to send me there and that was my first travel outside the Philippines and at no cost to me. I got my first passport and US visa as I requested for a side trip after the conference to the United States to visit my sister. My trip to Frankfurt was very memorable, not to mention, very funny. When we landed at the Frankfurt airport, I immediately claimed my luggage and hailed a taxi and told the driver to bring me to Sheraton Hotel. I was a bit uneasy when the cab driver merely smiled at me and pointed just outside his window the Sheraton Hotel just beside the airport. He politely instructed me to take the escalator just a few steps from the airport ticket counters which would bring me right to the lobby of Sheraton Hotel. I was laughing inside while trying to conceal my embarrassment and figuring that if it were in the Philippines, most probably the cab driver would first drive me around the city and after a 20-minute circling of Pasay City and Manila, come back to the airport and say, "Here's your hotel, sir, we were lucky there was not much traffic." Oh, by the way, I was very profuse in thanking the German cab driver for letting me off at once from his cab without giving me an unsolicited tour around the city.

Of course, there are so much more achievements to brag about but now it is more consoling to recall that episode of my career than gloating about it.

Fernando Duque is a lawyer who availed of optional retirement from the private sector as HRD specialist. He now indulges in selective law practice.

THEY SAID

Everybody's business

"In a nation confronted with terrorism, every peace-loving citizen in this country is a stakeholder."

—Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero on not solely blaming failure in military intelligence in the Koronal bombing since citizens did not provide information to them

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Human rights must be made real

WHY does the Philippines send its real heroes to jail?

We are two female students from Sweden, and we are studying International and Intercultural Social Work at the Mid-Sweden University. As part of our education we are now doing our field practice at the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP). During our field practice, we have been visiting political detainees in different jails around the country, and we would like to tell you about our feelings and thoughts after these visits.

We visited Manila City Jail and Quezon City Jail and it was a very strange and depressing experience for us. The conditions in the jails are inhuman. Both of the institutions were definitely overcrowded and the detainees didn't have any space for themselves. The construction of the buildings is very compact. This makes it very hard for the air to circulate inside the buildings, and therefore it is very, very hot and stuffy inside. In the Quezon City Jail, there was lack of water so it was hard for the detainees to attend to their personal hygiene. In the Manila City Jail, the detainees had to cook their food, wash their clothes and take care of personal hygiene in the same area. These conditions are very unhealthy and could lead to more illness. This is certainly not the way to treat human beings!

The political detainees whom we met have been detained for several years up to eight year without any conviction. How is this possible in a democracy? According to the detainees the hearings are postponed because of the lack of judges and lawyers. This is very strange to us because in some cases the hearings are done very quickly so it seems like the justice system is just for some special people. The political detainees that we met are in fact ordinary farmers or human rights workers who want to claim their human rights. They are struggling for a better future for themselves and for the Filipino people. To us, who come from a functional democracy, it seems that democratic rights in the Philippines are just so much empty words without value. The Philippine government claims that the overseas Filipino worker (OFW) is the modern hero of the Philippines. In fact, the real heroes who are struggling for a better future for all Filipino people are put in jail.

How are you going to build a just and fair society when you are putting people, who are struggling for their human rights in jail? It is time for the Philippine government to take the democratic rights from the paper they are written on and implement them in the real world. Democratic rights are supposed to serve the people, not the government. It is not a document for the government to use for its own purpose to show the international society that the Philippines is a democracy, when in fact much is lacking.

—CAMILLA SVENSSON
and ULRIKA NILSSON,
Task Force Detainees
of the Philippines,
45 St. Mary St., Cubao,
Quezon City

Clergyman's thoughts on SARS

LAST May 7, the priests of the archdiocese were gathered at Villa San Miguel to confront the issue of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). It's a "time for prudence" as the cardinal has admonished.

Two doctors from the Makati Medical Center gave us an audio-visual lecture on the much dreaded disease, the origin, the spread, the symptoms, the control, etc.

This is my "contemplation" on the SARS issue. We have been afflicted with something worse than SARS. It is SACS (Serious Acute Cover-up Syndrome). And it is the *takipan* syndrome. We tend to cover up wrongdoings, anomalies and sicknesses. All these to prevent scandals. And we term it "damage control."

At the recent Bangkok conference on SARS attended by no less than President Macapagal-Arroyo, the China delegation offered its apology for the cover-up on the deadly disease that has led to its proliferation to the rest of the world with more than 500 deaths and more than 7,000 cases in 23 countries.

God speaks to us in sundry ways, this time He is speaking to us through SARS. Let's reexamine ourselves and reform our lives while there's time. The clock is ticking fast. Our hearts are but "muffled drums" beating funeral marches to the grave.

—MSGR. NICO P. BAUTISTA,
8436 Kalayan Ave., Makati City

LETTERS PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Objecting to HR 16

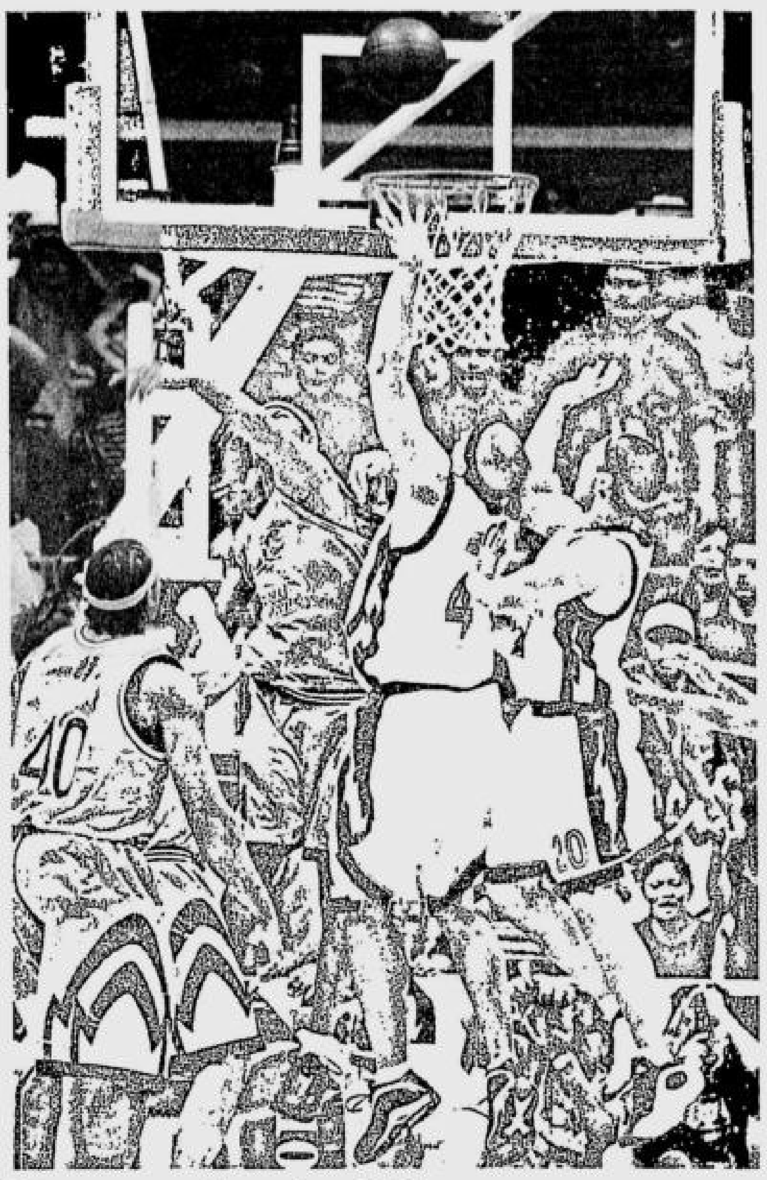
IT is quite obvious that Speaker Jose de Venecia is such a fast worker when it comes to causes that are close to his heart that will be to his best interests. What better illustration is there for this than the way he maneuvered the passage of House Resolution 16 in order to transform the House of Representatives into a Constitutional Assembly for charter change?

In contrast, it was quite obvious that he dragged his feet when the interests of the people and the country were at stake and were contrary to his own interests as in the case of the impeachment complaint against Comelec Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco.

We, of the Concerned Women of the Philippines (CWP), vehemently register our objection to the passage of HR 16 in such haste at the House. Before it is too late, we would like to exhort our senators who are still making up their minds not to succumb to any pressure and give enough time to listen to the people.

Changing the Constitution is a most serious undertaking, requiring much deliberation and thought, for its wide-ranging implications. For once, let the people see proof that the senators are listening to their clamor for sensitive and intelligent consideration of the issues involved in this crucial constitutional dilemma.

—EVELYN L. KILAYKO,
chair, Concerned Women
of the Philippines,
265-C, Katipunan Ave.,
Loyola Heights, Quezon City



Resurrecting the PBA

I WOULD like to comment on Recah Trinidad's article last May 7.

I agree that the Philippine Basketball Association will soon meet its eventual death if drastic measures and action plans will not be put in place. I have followed the PBA since its inception in 1975 and find it very frustrating to see people no longer interested in it—including myself.

However, as the old adage says, there is always life after death. So here are some of my unsolicited advice and formulas to resurrect the PBA and put it back in shape:

1. During the Crispa versus Toyota days, the rivalry was intense. Nowadays, players, coaches and managers just hop from one team to another. As a result, there is no rivalry developed but instead the impression is reinforced that players are playing just for money.

Suggestion: Players should not be allowed to transfer from one team to another very easily.

2. Before, fans trooped to the coliseum to see players play. There were no dance numbers, games, giveaways, etc.

Suggestion: Develop rivalry so that the players will play their hearts out in every game, and stop inviting singers, dancers, magicians to the games. This is not a concert or a circus.

3. Allow physical and aggressive play. As Robert Jaworski always said, "Play chess if you don't want to get hurt." Let's face it, fans love a physical brand of play and so let's give it to them.

4. Encourage the teams to get high quality imports, like Bates, Fields, Hacket, Robinson, etc.

5. Get veteran commentators and not amateurs to annotate the games. Andy Jao, Joaqui Trillo, Ronnie Nathanielz are good, but the rest of them are not. Before, the likes of Joe Cantada and Pingoy Pengson could raise the adrenalin of the ball games.

6. Reformat the PBA so that there will only be two conferences.

7. Develop local talents from the amateur leagues.

I hope these suggestions will help.

—ALVIN D. VENTURINA,
Las Piñas City

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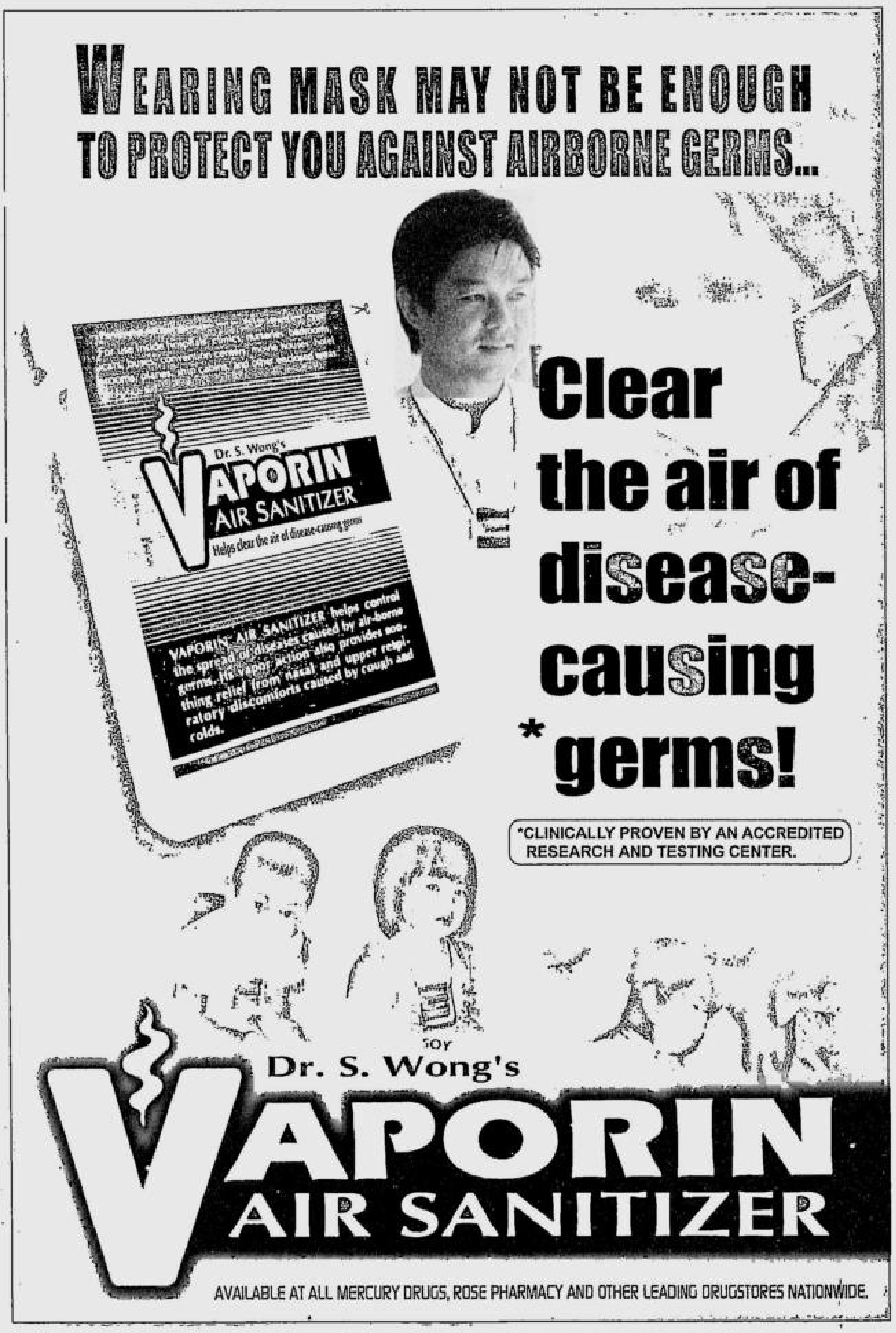
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What's stopping the Malabon flood control project?

THE RAINY season is about to come. Once again, the same old question is in the minds of the people of Malabon—whatever happened to Malabon's flood control project?

The long-standing promise of a sophisticated infrastructure that will save Malabon from recurrent flooding has still remained unfulfilled. Today, it is the main deterrent to the city's progress.

Businesses are the most affected by the dreaded floods. For instance, who would want to eat in a half-submerged restaurant? I have spent thousands of pesos of hard-earned money in trying to elevate the flooring of my eatery. But for some reason, the area seems to be sinking deeper and deeper.

This is also the problem of many of my colleagues in business. Multiply the damage caused by constant flooding in our business by the number of business establishments in Malabon, and you'll surely get a staggering amount lost each year, some of which could have been collected by the city as local taxes. The lost revenue to the local government could have been used for the construction of roads and schools.

The Mega Flood Control Project is the priority of Malabon Mayor Amado Vicencio. But, in spite of the fact that the team in the Office of the Mayor specifically assigned on this project has already sought the commitment of foreign donors who will finance the construction of the dikes, there are opposing forces hindering its implementation.

We are told in a status report regularly issued to businessmen by the office of Mayor Vicencio that the P3.9-billion project is ready to take off. Almost. That it has been shelved in the national bureaucratic processes outside of the control of the mayor is the only remaining hindrance.

I think it's time for the people of Malabon, specially the business community, to get involved in ensuring that the much-delayed project gets immediately implemented. We should not be fence-sitters because this is a fight for our welfare, our dignity as deserving citizens trapped between strong interests.

We should actively advocate for the progress of Malabon and support our local leadership in their quest to deliver their promise to the city's constituents.

—JAYSON ALMARIO,
secretary, Association of Restaurant
Owners of Malabon (Aroma),
105 Gen. Luna St., Malabon City

BID detainee asks for due process

FOR almost two years now, I have been staying in the detention cell at the Bureau of Immigration in Mandaue City. I have been detained due to alleged violations of immigration laws and cases pending before the regular courts of Cebu City.

I have been criminally charged in 13 cases in the regular courts, but all of these cases I have won. These cases were baseless, malicious and manufactured by my enemies in cahoots with a particular group with irresponsible advocacy. Just recently, my last case was decided convincingly in my favor, after almost three years in trial by an impartial and strict judge. It was a total victory for me to win all 13 cases in a row. However, I am still languishing in BID detention, without a complainant nor hearing of my case. Worse, the BID had decided to deport me on the basis of allegations, in my country, that I was convicted of numerous child abuse crimes. In fact, I never had an adjudication of guilt on any allegations. All were dropped and expunged from records. I was not given a copy of the deportation order. I only knew about it when I read the rebuttal of the commissioner published in the INQUIRER, and when my friend persistently asked for it in the BID's central office which this took almost a year. The said allegations were supplied by my enemies and a group which are very active in their advocacy. The cases cited in the allegations were even ordered by the judge in the United States to be destroyed and expunged.

My lawyer has already filed several petitions and motions on my behalf, but the BID has not yet acted on them, until this time. I do not ask for an acquittal as condition for my release, but rather I strongly ask that the universal principle of due process be afforded my case. As an accused, I have the right to confront my accusers, if any, and prove my innocence, either in court, or in front of an administrative body.

I ask the BID commissioner to release me, pending reinvestigation on my case. I want to prove that I am innocent of any allegation. The courts have cleared me of any wrongdoing, against any person here and abroad. My family and myself have suffered enough because of the malicious imputations on my name.

—PERRY MARTIN MCNEELY,
Bureau of Immigration and Deportation
Prison, Mandaue City

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Taiwan reports 12 more SARS deaths

TAIPEI—Taiwan's health authorities yesterday reported 12 more deaths from Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, a record daily high, taking the toll on the island to 52 from 383 cases.

In Beijing, China reported five more people had died from SARS and another 17 were infected in the 24 hours to 10 a.m. yesterday.

The Health Ministry said four of the deaths were in Beijing, currently the hardest hit place in the world, and 12 of the new cases. China has now had 294 deaths from the flu-like virus and 5,248 cases.

The new deaths have raised the global toll to at least 660—most of them in Asia—since the disease first surfaced in southern China in November and spread to more than two dozen countries.

Taiwan warned yesterday that the island still hasn't seen the worst in it latest wave of SARS cases, while the World Health Organization said that only 16 of the more than 7,800 people infected worldwide got the disease while aboard an airplane.

In Hong Kong, where the SARS emergency has been easing, officials said that their latest patient is a 4-month-old girl who apparently caught the illness from her grandfather in a case that left six members of a family hospitalized.

Singapore said it was giving fever-detecting thermal cameras to Beijing's international airport in a bid to slow the spread of severe acute respiratory syndrome.

More than 90 percent of Taiwan's infections can be traced to transmission in hospitals, and the Kaohsiung University Hospital in the island's south became the latest trouble spot when it reported 35 suspected SARS cases Monday night.

"The new wave has yet to peak," said Lee Ming-liang, head of Taiwan's SARS Control Committee.

The latest hospital outbreak in Kaohsiung probably occurred after patients who had received treatment at the city's Chang Gung Memorial Hospital later went to the university hospital and spread the disease, officials said.

Chang Gung, for its part, had suffered an outbreak after it treated a woman who had earlier sought treatment of kidney problems at a Taipei hospital that suffered an outbreak.

Lee said authorities will speed up a measure to give all 23 million Taiwanese a new "smart" health ID card to track their medical records, including which hospitals they have visited.

The WHO said at its annual assembly in Geneva on Monday that airport screening of passengers for fevers and other symptoms have drastically reduced the danger of contracting the disease while on a plane.

"The phenomenon of airline transmission of SARS is historical now, we believe," said Mike Ryan, WHO's global coordinator for anti-SARS efforts.

"Of course, there is always a risk if a SARS patient gets on a plane, but the idea is to prevent them from getting on the plane in the first place and the risk, we believe, has been reduced now to infinitesimally low levels because of screening and surveillance," he added.

WHO medical experts said that all of the 16 cases of people contracting SARS while aboard a plane happened on a total of four flights and before airlines adopted tough screening measures. *AP*

Airports agree to standardize SARS screening

SINGAPORE—Two major airline groups on Tuesday applauded measures agreed by East Asian airport officials to prevent the spread of the SARS virus across borders, saying these should help restore confidence in air travel.

Airport officials from China, Japan, South Korea and nine Southeast Asian Nations who met in the Philippines last week agreed to standardize border controls in their battle to contain the deadly virus which has devastated their economies.

Among the measures will be temperature screening for all passengers at the region's international airports from Aug. 15, although some countries like Singapore have already implemented it.

The officials also agreed to standardize screening procedures, quarantine documentation and health declaration cards as part of an early warning system to detect those showing symptoms of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) and the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA) both welcomed the agreement as an added boost to the hard-hit aviation industry.

AAPA director general Richard Stirland said last week's meeting in the Philippines "was exactly what was needed for a concerted effort to establish a common set of effective and practical measures" to prevent airline passengers showing SARS symptoms from spreading the disease.

IATA said in a statement that it "strongly supports pre-departure screening of passengers for SARS symptoms" in line with the guidelines issued by the World Health Organization.

The agreement "is an important next-step in restoring confidence in air travel," it said. *AFP*

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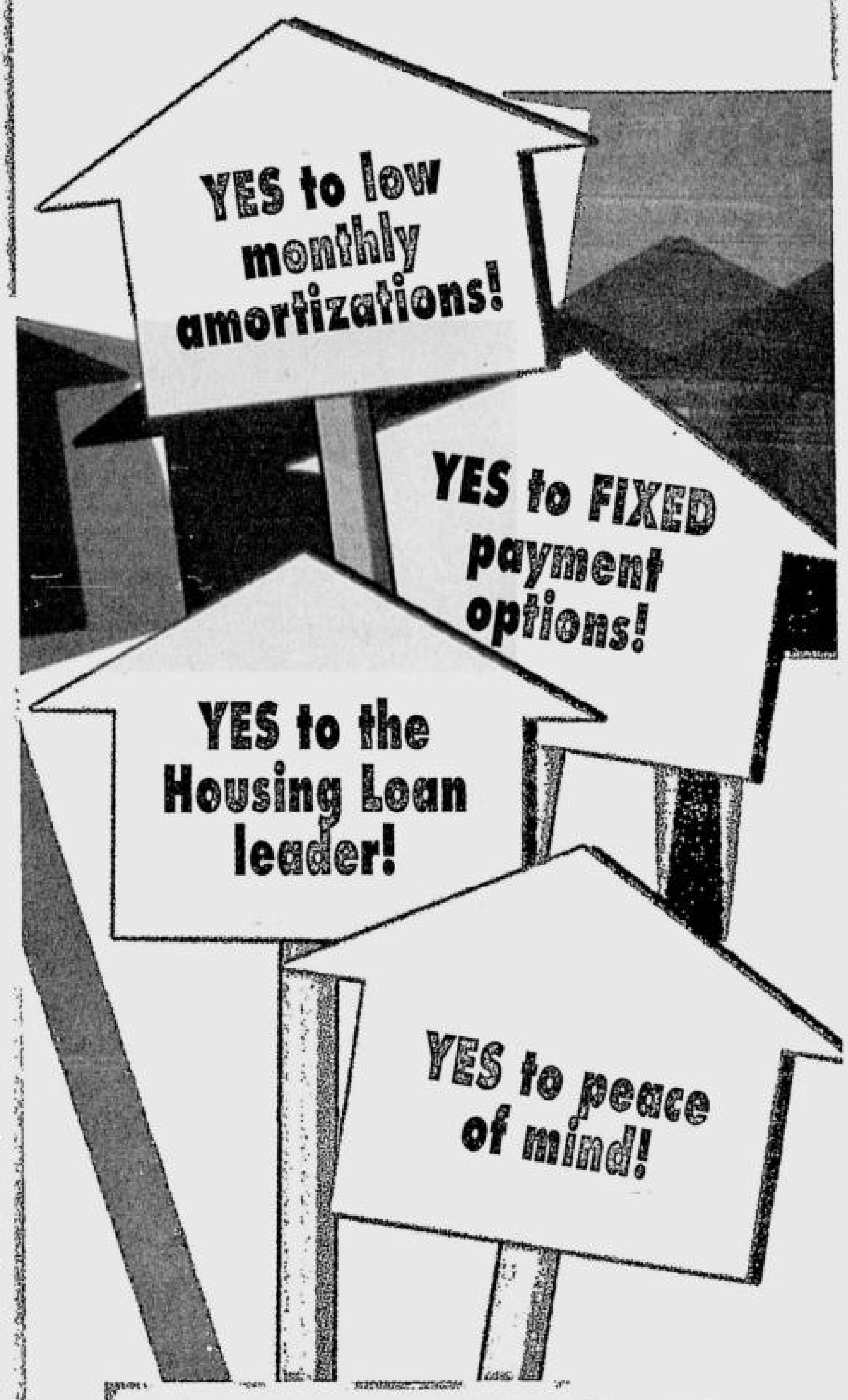

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5th suicide hit in 3 days kills 3 more in Israel

AFULA, Israel—A Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself up at a shopping mall in the northern Israeli town of Afula on Monday, killing three other people and injuring scores in the fifth anti-Israeli bombing in three days.

Following the attack, Palestinian prime minister Mahmud Abbas late Monday made major personnel appointments as part of his efforts to rebuild the Palestinian security forces, a statement from the interior ministry said.

The worst spate of Palestinian suicide attacks this year revived fears of a radical response, possibly against Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, whom Israel accused of abetting the attacks.

Israeli police said the bomber killed three and wounded around 30 people in this small town, which lies just 10 km from the militant hotbed of Jenin in the West Bank.

A worse bloodbath was averted when a woman security guard posted at the entrance of the mall apparently prevented the bomber from entering, Israeli media said, adding that the guard was one of the dead.

She was the third security guard to die in a bid to prevent suicide bombers from detonating their explosives, following similar scenarios at a popular seafront pub in Tel Aviv on April 30 and a train station in Kfar Saba a week earlier.

The radical Palestinian group Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the blast in a telephone call to AFP in Jenin, while the four other suicide attacks were claimed by the group's bigger rival Hamas.

Islamic Jihad identified their bomber as Hiba Azem Sai Daraghma, a 19-year-old female English student.

The Palestinian leadership slammed the bombings, saying: "We strongly condemn the attack in Afula as well as the attacks in Jerusalem and Hebron."

"This attack against civilians is aimed at destroying all peace efforts and the international opportunity for the implementation of the roadmap," its statement said.

The Afula attack came just hours after another Palestinian suicide bomber riding a bicycle wounded three Israeli soldiers near the Jewish settlement of Kfar Darom in the Gaza Strip.

On Sunday, nine people plus the bombers were killed in a double suicide attack in Jerusalem, while two Jewish settlers were also killed by a bomber Saturday night in the southern West Bank city of Hebron.

The string of attacks came despite Israel's total closure of the Palestinian territories following the Jerusalem bombings and an almost complete reoccupation of the West Bank by the army since June 2002.

"We loosened our defense lately and made good-will gestures toward the Palestinians, but this was our gruesome reward. Terrorist organizations took advantage of the situation to unleash this lethal frenzy on us," government spokesman Avi Pazner said.

He reiterated accusations that Arafat was encouraging attacks to sabotage peace efforts and weaken his rival, Palestinian prime minister Mahmud Abbas.

"We are facing a well planned effort by terrorist organisations in coordination with Yasser Arafat to carry out as many attacks as possible," he said.

A high-ranking Israeli official had announced earlier Monday that Sharon's government would boycott foreign officials who meet with Arafat in the future.

"We have cancelled no meeting already planned with a foreign official, but those who want to see Arafat in the future should know that they will not be able to meet Israeli officials," the official said.

Fearing the veteran leader could be finding a new lease of life despite the creation of Abbas' power-sharing position, Israel said Monday it would not take immediate steps to expel him but did not exclude it in the long term.

Despite the spiralling violence, US President George W. Bush also expressed his confidence that the peace process was still alive Monday. *AFP*

A YOUNG girl lights a candle under the gaze of her parents at the Ghriba synagogue during the festivities of the Jewish pilgrimage of the Ghriba on the isle of Djerba in southern Tunisia May 19. The synagogue was the target of a suicide truck bomb April 11 of last year which killed 21 people. AFP

7 die in Lebanon refugee camp war

AIN EL-HILWEH, Lebanon—At least seven people were killed and 24 wounded when militant Islamists battled Fatah fighters in an apparent turf war in Lebanon's largest Palestinian refugee camp on Monday, witnesses said.

Analysts said the clash, the bloodiest in at least a year, amounted to a battle for control of south Lebanon's Ain el-Hilweh camp, where friction between the Islamists and mainstream Palestinian factions has been mounting for weeks.

Witnesses said hundreds of gunmen used automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades in a fight that erupted ahead of the funerals of two people killed in an ambush on Saturday.

The fighting pitted an obscure militant Islamist group, Osbat al-Ansar, and an offshoot, Osbat an-Nour, against forces of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement, one of several Palestinian factions that control most of the camp.

Hospital sources and civil defense in the nearby port city of Sidon said four Fatah fighters, two militants and one civilian were killed.

A Fatah source said the bodyguard of a Fatah man the militants blame for inciting Saturday's ambush of an Islamist leader was shot dead.

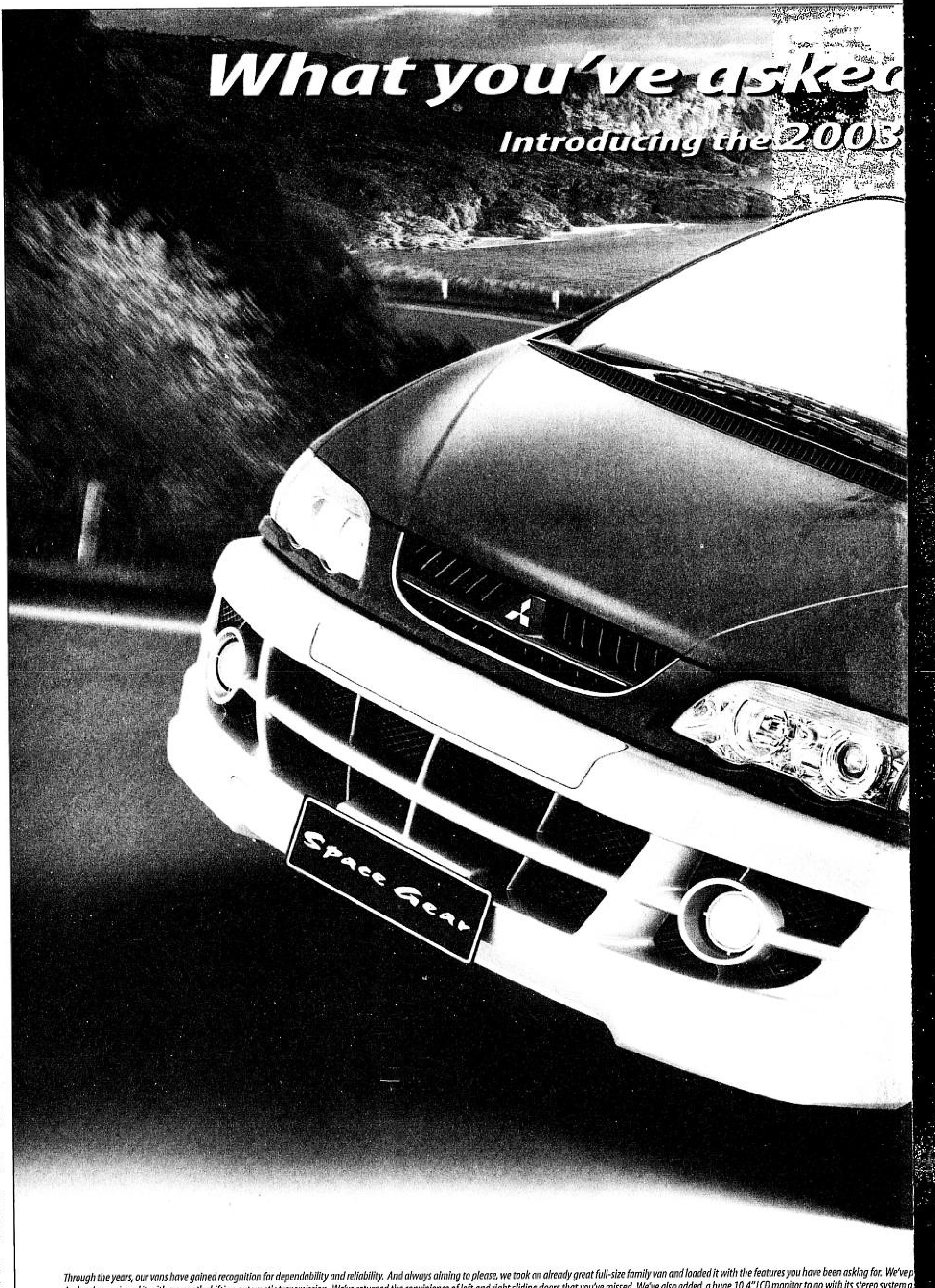
"To Jihad!" a mosque linked to the militant group blared over its loudspeaker. Another mosque, saying it spoke for civilians, called out: "Please stop firing as Israel is the only beneficiary."

Witnesses said armed Islamists, some masked and others wearing headbands reading "There is no God but Allah," appeared to have taken control of parts of the main street and were patrolling it. By evening, they controlled several streets.

Other Islamists were trying to calm the situation and by late Monday a shaky calm took hold, though residents were unsure it would last.

The Beirut office of the news agency Agence France Presse said a Lebanese photographer working for it was shot in the leg and taken to hospital.

The clashes were the bloodiest in Ain el-Hilweh since last August when three people were killed in a firefight between pro-Fatah forces and militants angry over their role in surrendering a wanted Islamist to the Lebanese army. *Reuters*



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Exterminate Aceh rebs, general orders

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia—Indonesia's military chief ordered his men on Tuesday to "exterminate" Aceh separatist guerrillas who refuse to surrender as a huge offensive in the province went into its second day.

"Hunt them down and exterminate them," Gen. Endriartono Sutarto told around 400 officers in a briefing in the provincial capital.

Indonesia has launched its biggest military operation since the 1975 invasion of East Timor in an attempt to finish off the Free Aceh Movement (GAM). Thousands of troops, backed up by aircraft and warships, are taking part.

Sutarto said rebels would be well treated if they give up.

"But if they continue to be stubborn and raise arms, and continue to cause suffering to the people, then your sole duty is to exterminate them," he said.

He ordered soldiers to avoid civilian casualties and said any excesses against civilians would bring severe punishment.

"What you are doing here now is being broadcast all over the world," Sutarto told them.

"If there are soldiers who do violate (the order) and cause suffering to people in the field, then just shoot them in the head," he told the officers.

The assault began early Monday, hours after last-ditch peace talks broke down in Tokyo. Hundreds of extra troops parachuted into the province on Sumatra island or waded ashore from landing craft in the first deployment of reinforcements.

The military said resistance so far was lighter than expected but blamed rebels for torching 30 schools.

"They (GAM) are continuing to look for targets and keep moving but their level of resistance is smaller than we had thought," said Lt. Col. Ahmad Yani Basuki, spokesperson for the military operation.

Seven rebels had been arrested and five killed so far, he told ElShinta radio.

Aceh military spokesperson Firdaus Komarno said six schools were torched in Aceh Besar district late Monday. In Bireuen district 24 schools had been set alight since Monday afternoon.

He said an airborne battalion, normally around 600 men, arrived Tuesday at Takengon airport in Central Aceh.

Officials said Monday there are 28,000 soldiers or marines in Aceh plus 8,000 regular police and 2,000 paramilitary police. They are facing off against an estimated 5,000 guerrillas with 2,000 light weapons.

An estimated 10,000 people, most of them civilians, have been killed in the conflict since 1976. The most recent peace pact had lasted only since Dec. 9.

The military said the assault could last months and might involve aerial and naval gunfire against rebel bases. A plane pounded suspected rebel bases with rockets on Monday.

The government says the assault was prompted by GAM's refusal at the Tokyo talks formally to end its independence struggle and to accept special autonomy.

President Megawati Sukarnoputri's decision to go back to war is highly popular with the powerful military and with the public outside Aceh. It sparked dismay overseas.

The US State Department said military force could not solve the problem and called for a return to negotiations. Australia and other countries made similar pleas.

A 10-year operation launched in Aceh in 1989 was marked by gross military human rights abuses and international rights groups expressed alarm at the new assault.

The New York-based Human Rights Watch said the campaign and the imposition of martial law in Aceh "sets the stage for gross human rights violations."

During the previous 10-year campaign, thousands of civilians were murdered, disappeared or tortured, the group said. *AFP*

TWO Timorese girls hunt for edible seaweed, May 18, in the Banda Sea off the coast of Dili, East Timor. AP/SUZANNE PLUNKETT

E. Timor marks first birthday amid problems

DILI—Tiny East Timor marked its first birthday Tuesday with lively celebrations in Dili and elsewhere despite a warning from President Xanana Gusmao of the problems facing the world's newest nation.

High school marching bands and the fledgling army staged parades and the Chinese community performed lion dances in Dili. Police turned out in new uniforms for the occasion.

An afternoon music festival was to be held and a soccer tournament has been staged across the country. Thailand has donated 1,200 sports balls to Asia's poorest country as an anniversary gift.

"I'm happy to be at this celebration," said Josefino Do Rego, 29, a Dili vendor.

"I live from hand to mouth but it's okay. Other people do nothing but protest."

Martino Viegas, 25, was in more sombre mood.

"Today is a historic moment for Timor Loro Sae (East Timor) but there are problems," he said. "We young people find it hard to get jobs."

East Timorese attained independence one year ago amid scenes of enormous enthusiasm, following 31 months of United Nations stewardship, 24 years of often brutal Indonesian rule and centuries of Portuguese colonialism.

But half the population lacks any formal education, youth unemployment is high and two out of five people live on less than 55 cents a day.

Gusmao, in a national address, summed up the problems bluntly.

"There is little food on the hearth; agricultural crops are either not sold or sold at extremely low prices; the price of imported goods are an insult to the purchasing power of the population," he said.

"There is no prospect for employment for the youth and both the legal and the infrastructural conditions of the country do not attract investors."

The former anti-Indonesia guerrilla chief said East Timor's 800,000 people are facing "enormous difficulties." *AFP*

Sri Lanka village buried under landslide

RATNAPURA, Sri Lanka—Rescuers who reached a remote Sri Lankan village following heavy weekend rains found it buried in a landslide, with one person killed and 24 missing and feared dead, a lawmaker from the area said Tuesday.

At least 200 people have died in the disaster, the worst in five decades, and another 200 are missing, officials say. At least 60,000 houses have been damaged or destroyed in three districts.

The rescuers found one body at Dothupitiya, 25 km east of Ratnapura, and had little hope of finding the farming village's 24 other residents, Sri Lanka parliament member Mahinda Ratnatilleke said.

"Chances are very dim that there would be survivors," Ratnatilleke said.

A Sri Lankan air force rescue helicopter reached the village late Monday, following heavy rains that started Saturday. It found the village buried in a landslide, Ratnatilleke said.

"It is very difficult to reach the village on foot, so we are sending more helicopters," Ratnatilleke said.

Air force helicopters were ferrying water and food parcels—containing rice, curry, vegetables and chili paste wrapped in plastic and newspapers—to an estimated 150,000 people in affected areas across Sri Lanka.

In the city of Ratnapura, the worst affected by the disaster, a cricket ground had been converted into a base for the aircraft.

Thousands of people returned to their homes Tuesday to find them either swept away or damaged.

"People are finding to their horror that their homes have gone and this is the biggest problem we have right now," Ratnatilleke said. *AP*

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Exterminate Aceh rebs, general orders

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia—Indonesia's military chief ordered his men on Tuesday to "exterminate" Aceh separatist guerrillas who refuse to surrender as a huge offensive in the province went into its second day.

"Hunt them down and exterminate them," Gen. Endriartono Sutarto told around 400 officers in a briefing in the provincial capital.

Indonesia has launched its biggest military operation since the 1975 invasion of East Timor in an attempt to finish off the Free Aceh Movement (GAM). Thousands of troops, backed up by aircraft and warships, are taking part.

Sutarto said rebels would be well treated if they give up.

"But if they continue to be stubborn and raise arms, and continue to cause suffering to the people, then your sole duty is to exterminate them," he said.

He ordered soldiers to avoid civilian casualties and said any excesses against civilians would bring severe punishment.

"What you are doing here now is being broadcast all over the world," Sutarto told them.

"If there are soldiers who do violate (the order) and cause suffering to people in the field, then just shoot them in the head," he told the officers.

The assault began early Monday, hours after last-ditch peace talks broke down in Tokyo. Hundreds of extra troops parachuted into the province on Sumatra island or waded ashore from landing craft in the first deployment of reinforcements.

The military said resistance so far was lighter than expected but blamed rebels for torching 30 schools.

"They (GAM) are continuing to look for targets and keep moving but their level of resistance is smaller than we had thought," said Lt. Col. Ahmad Yani Basuki, spokesperson for the military operation.

Seven rebels had been arrested and five killed so far, he told ElShinta radio.

Aceh military spokesperson Firdaus Komarno said six schools were torched in Aceh Besar district late Monday. In Bireuen district 24 schools had been set alight since Monday afternoon.

He said an airborne battalion, normally around 600 men, arrived Tuesday at Takengon airport in Central Aceh.

Officials said Monday there are 28,000 soldiers or marines in Aceh plus 8,000 regular police and 2,000 paramilitary police. They are facing off against an estimated 5,000 guerrillas with 2,000 light weapons.

An estimated 10,000 people, most of them civilians, have been killed in the conflict since 1976. The most recent peace pact had lasted only since Dec. 9.

The military said the assault could last months and might involve aerial and naval gunfire against rebel bases. A plane pounded suspected rebel bases with rockets on Monday.

The government says the assault was prompted by GAM's refusal at the Tokyo talks formally to end its independence struggle and to accept special autonomy.

President Megawati Sukarnoputri's decision to go back to war is highly popular with the powerful military and with the public outside Aceh. It sparked dismay overseas.

The US State Department said military force could not solve the problem and called for a return to negotiations. Australia and other countries made similar pleas.

A 10-year operation launched in Aceh in 1989 was marked by gross military human rights abuses and international rights groups expressed alarm at the new assault.

The New York-based Human Rights Watch said the campaign and the imposition of martial law in Aceh "sets the stage for gross human rights violations."

During the previous 10-year campaign, thousands of civilians were murdered, disappeared or tortured, the group said. *AFP*

TWO Timorese girls hunt for edible seaweed, May 18, in the Banda Sea off the coast of Dili, East Timor. AP/SUZANNE PLUNKETT

E. Timor marks first birthday amid problems

DILI—Tiny East Timor marked its first birthday Tuesday with lively celebrations in Dili and elsewhere despite a warning from President Xanana Gusmao of the problems facing the world's newest nation.

High school marching bands and the fledgling army staged parades and the Chinese community performed lion dances in Dili. Police turned out in new uniforms for the occasion.

An afternoon music festival was to be held and a soccer tournament has been staged across the country. Thailand has donated 1,200 sports balls to Asia's poorest country as an anniversary gift.

"I'm happy to be at this celebration," said Josefino Do Rego, 29, a Dili vendor.

"I live from hand to mouth but it's okay. Other people do nothing but protest."

Martino Viegas, 25, was in more sombre mood.

"Today is a historic moment for Timor Loro Sae (East Timor) but there are problems," he said. "We young people find it hard to get jobs."

East Timorese attained independence one year ago amid scenes of enormous enthusiasm, following 31 months of United Nations stewardship, 24 years of often brutal Indonesian rule and centuries of Portuguese colonialism.

But half the population lacks any formal education, youth unemployment is high and two out of five people live on less than 55 cents a day.

Gusmao, in a national address, summed up the problems bluntly.

"There is little food on the hearth; agricultural crops are either not sold or sold at extremely low prices; the price of imported goods are an insult to the purchasing power of the population," he said.

"There is no prospect for employment for the youth and both the legal and the infrastructural conditions of the country do not attract investors."

The former anti-Indonesia guerrilla chief said East Timor's 800,000 people are facing "enormous difficulties." *AFP*

Sri Lanka village buried under landslide

RATNAPURA, Sri Lanka—Rescuers who reached a remote Sri Lankan village following heavy weekend rains found it buried in a landslide, with one person killed and 24 missing and feared dead, a lawmaker from the area said Tuesday.

At least 200 people have died in the disaster, the worst in five decades, and another 200 are missing, officials say. At least 60,000 houses have been damaged or destroyed in three districts.

The rescuers found one body at Dothupitiya, 25 km east of Ratnapura, and had little hope of finding the farming village's 24 other residents, Sri Lanka parliament member Mahinda Ratnatilleke said.

"Chances are very dim that there would be survivors," Ratnatilleke said.

A Sri Lankan air force rescue helicopter reached the village late Monday, following heavy rains that started Saturday. It found the village buried in a landslide, Ratnatilleke said.

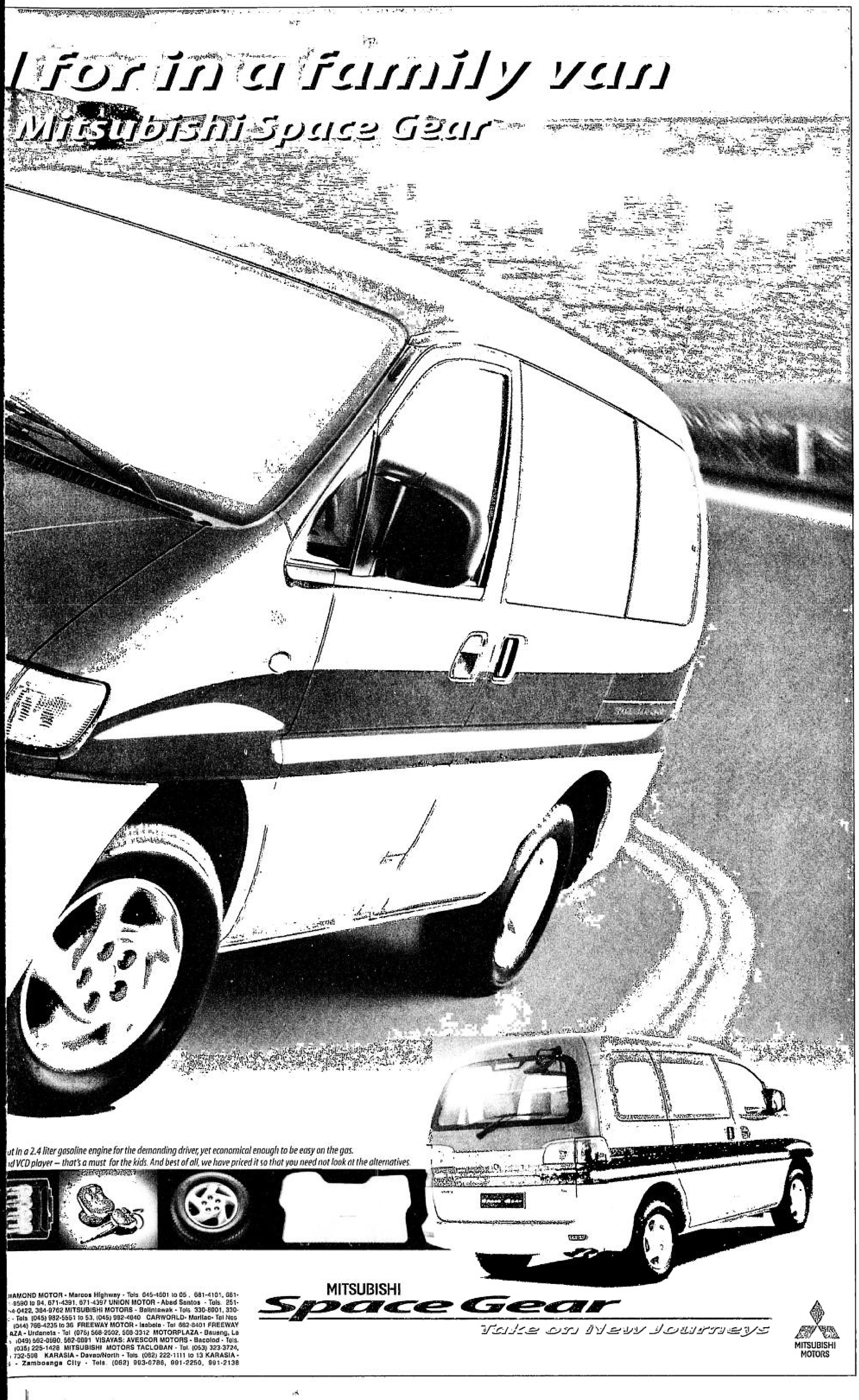
"It is very difficult to reach the village on foot, so we are sending more helicopters," Ratnatilleke said.

Air force helicopters were ferrying water and food parcels—containing rice, curry, vegetables and chili paste wrapped in plastic and newspapers—to an estimated 150,000 people in affected areas across Sri Lanka.

In the city of Ratnapura, the worst affected by the disaster, a cricket ground had been converted into a base for the aircraft.

Thousands of people returned to their homes Tuesday to find them either swept away or damaged.

"People are finding to their horror that their homes have gone and this is the biggest problem we have right now," Ratnatilleke said. *AP*



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UN agency chief warns of Iraq nuclear emergency

VIENNA—The head of the United Nations nuclear watchdog agency warned on Monday that a nuclear contamination emergency may be developing in Iraq and appealed to the United States to let his experts back into the country.

"I am deeply concerned by the almost daily reports of looting and destruction at nuclear sites," International Atomic Energy Agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei said in a statement.

He said he was especially worried "about the potential radiological safety and security implications of nuclear and radiological materials that may no longer be under control."

He said the reports the IAEA has received described uranium being emptied on the ground from containers then taken for domestic use and radioactive sources being stolen and removed from their shielding.

"We have a moral responsibility to establish the facts without delay and take urgent remedial action," ElBaradei said.

The UN agency has warned that stolen radioactive material could end up in the hands of terrorists who could use it to make dirty bombs, which combine radioactive material with a conventional explosive like dynamite to spread it over a wide area.

In Washington, a senior State Department official hinted the United States might be more favorable to the IAEA returning to Iraq on its own rather than under the auspices of the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC).

"There are two different things that need to be looked at and to some extent we'll have to look at them differently as we go forward, although neither one is propitious at this moment," said the US official.

ElBaradei first asked the United States on April 10 to secure nuclear material stored under UN seal at Iraq's Tuwaitha nuclear research center and was promised by the United States that its military would keep the site secure.

One of the sources stored at Tuwaitha is caesium 137, a highly radioactive powder that would be especially dangerous in a dirty bomb. In 1987, a canister of caesium powder found in a Brazil junkyard exposed 249 people to radiation, killing four.

After numerous media reports that Tuwaitha and other nuclear facilities in Iraq had been looted, ElBaradei wrote again to the US on April 29 requesting permission to send a mission to Iraq to investigate the looting reports.

The IAEA has received no response from Washington and said that the contamination in Iraq could lead to a "serious humanitarian situation." *Reuters*

US offers concessions at UN, but keeps control of Iraq oil

UNITED NATIONS—In hopes of getting strong UN support, the United States made some concessions in its quest to lift 13-year-old trade sanctions against Iraq, somewhat enhancing the role of the United Nations and opening the door for the return of UN arms inspectors.

But the resolution, expected to be adopted by Friday, still gives the United States and Britain wide-ranging powers to run Iraq and control its oil industry until a permanent government is established, which could take years.

The text, the third version distributed on Monday, seeks to accommodate some of the criticism by France, Russia, China and other UN Security Council members, particularly what they see as an attempt to sideline the United Nations but obtain privileges the world body has under international law.

While few expect any country to veto the text, the United States wants a large majority in the 15-nation council.

Without UN action to lift the sanctions, imposed when Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait in 1990, Washington would be in a legal no man's land, with many firms unwilling to engage in trade with Iraq, and oil exports open to lawsuits.

Russia's UN Ambassador Sergei Lavrov said he "welcomed the mood of the co-sponsors to really try their best to respond to as many questions as they can." But he said council members wanted "more clarity" at the lack of any time limit or renewal of the resolution.

In deference to Russia, which was favored in contracts by the ousted government of President Saddam Hussein, the resolution phases out the existing UN-run oil and civilian supply network over six months instead of four months.

It does not guarantee that all contracts in the so-called oil-for-food pipeline will be honored, such as the $4 billion owed Russian firms, but leaves time to sort them out.

On the political role of the United Nations, the draft calls for a high-level special representative with "independent responsibilities." The envoy would "work intensively" with the United States and Britain "to facilitate a process leading to an internationally recognized, representative government of Iraq" but his or her duties are still vague.

US Ambassador John Negroponte said Washington could offer further changes but it was unlikely. "Never say never," he said. "But... we have gone just about as far as we can in meeting the concerns expressed by other delegations."

The resolution, he said, foresaw no role for UN arms inspectors. But the new text mentions their mandate in UN resolutions since 1991, and opens the door for their return to verify Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction. *Reuters*

Blood pressure diet acts as diuretic, study says

WASHINGTON—A low-fat diet rich in fruits and vegetables may lower blood pressure by acting as a diuretic, Japanese and US researchers said on Monday.

The American Heart Association and US government have for years recommended the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension diet as an easy way to lower blood pressure without taking drugs, but it was not clear how it worked.

But researchers said they concluded the diet's high mineral levels can help the body get rid of excess salt—just as diuretics do.

Dr. Genjiro Kimura of the Nagoya City University Graduate School of Medical Sciences in Japan said the diet may even prevent the development of high blood pressure. In the United States, a person has a 90 percent chance of developing high blood pressure after age 50—something not seen in less developed countries.

"If people followed the DASH diet from childhood, I think hypertension would not occur in adulthood, although we do not have data available to prove that," Kimura said in a statement.

Writing in the journal Circulation, published by the American Heart Association, Kimura and colleagues said they took a closer look at a study that showed the blood pressure benefits of the DASH diet were greatest among people who ate the most salt.

They analyzed information about 375 adults with normal or slightly high blood pressure. The patients ate either a DASH diet or a more typical diet.

Over 90 days the researchers varied how much salt each patient ate, and took blood pressure measurements and urine samples. The DASH diet is rich in potassium and calcium, both of which can help the body excrete salt.

The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute recommended this month that most patients with simple high blood pressure try diuretics first and add other drugs as needed. *Reuters*

Colombia troops accused of stealing rebel money

BOGOTA—Colombia on Monday unveiled a massive corruption scandal involving nearly 150 members of its elite counter-guerrilla forces, who allegedly pocketed cash from a suspected rebel war-chest they found on patrol last month.

The army's commander in chief, Gen. Carlos Ospina, said a Colombian judge had ordered the arrest of 107 military men.

Three officers, 16 noncommissioned officers and 21 soldiers were already in custody on embezzlement charges, he said.

"They found a container which appears to have belonged to FARC (rebel commanders)... with a substantial sum of money inside, the amount of which has not yet been determined," Ospina told reporters at the presidential palace.

The scandal strikes hard at the US-backed Colombian army, which began receiving counter-insurgency training from US Special Forces this year to help fight a four-decade-old guerrilla conflict. It also recently won access to US-donated military hardware once restricted to the war on drugs.

The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, a 17,000-member rebel army known by its Spanish initials FARC, is believed to be well financed from "taxing" the world's largest cocaine industry and by kidnapping citizens and foreigners for ransom.

The anti-narcotics police, which hope to stem FARC financing by eradicating drug crops, were hit by a scandal last year involving the disappearance of about $2 million in US aid from an administrative account.

Washington appeared to forgive that mistake, and has poured about $2 billion into Colombia's war on drugs in recent years in a bid to stem the flow of Colombian cocaine and heroin to the United States.

Ospina stressed on Monday that Colombian President Alvaro Uribe and the armed forces would not tolerate corruption. He said the army had been investigating its soldiers once they start exhibiting "strange behavior."

"A high number of them (abruptly) submitted their resignation and another group abandoned the service without offering any explanation at all," Ospina said.

"The president, the defense minister, the commander of the armed forces and the commander of the army inform the general public that they will not tolerate acts of corruption, of any kind," he added. *Reuters*

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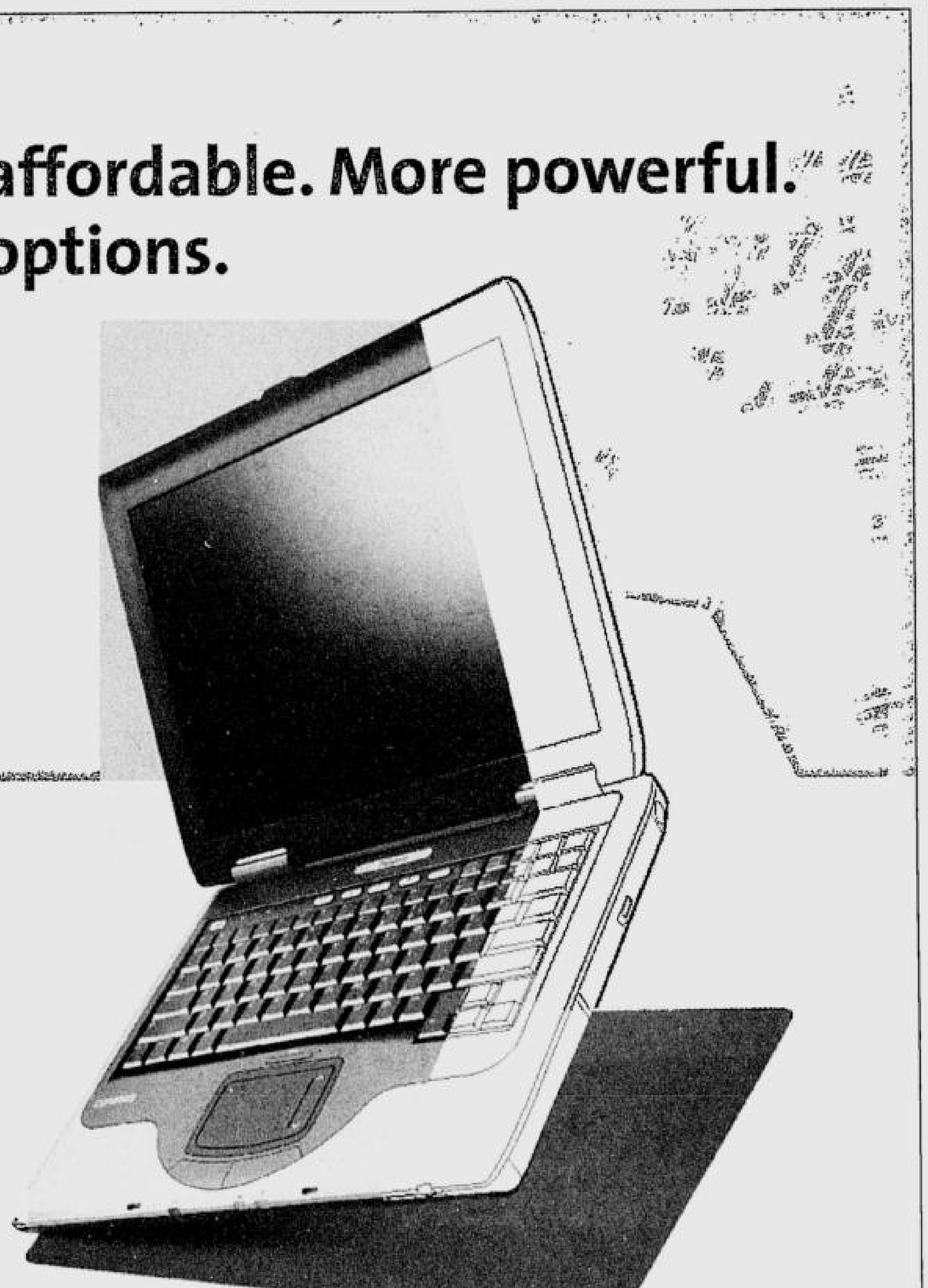

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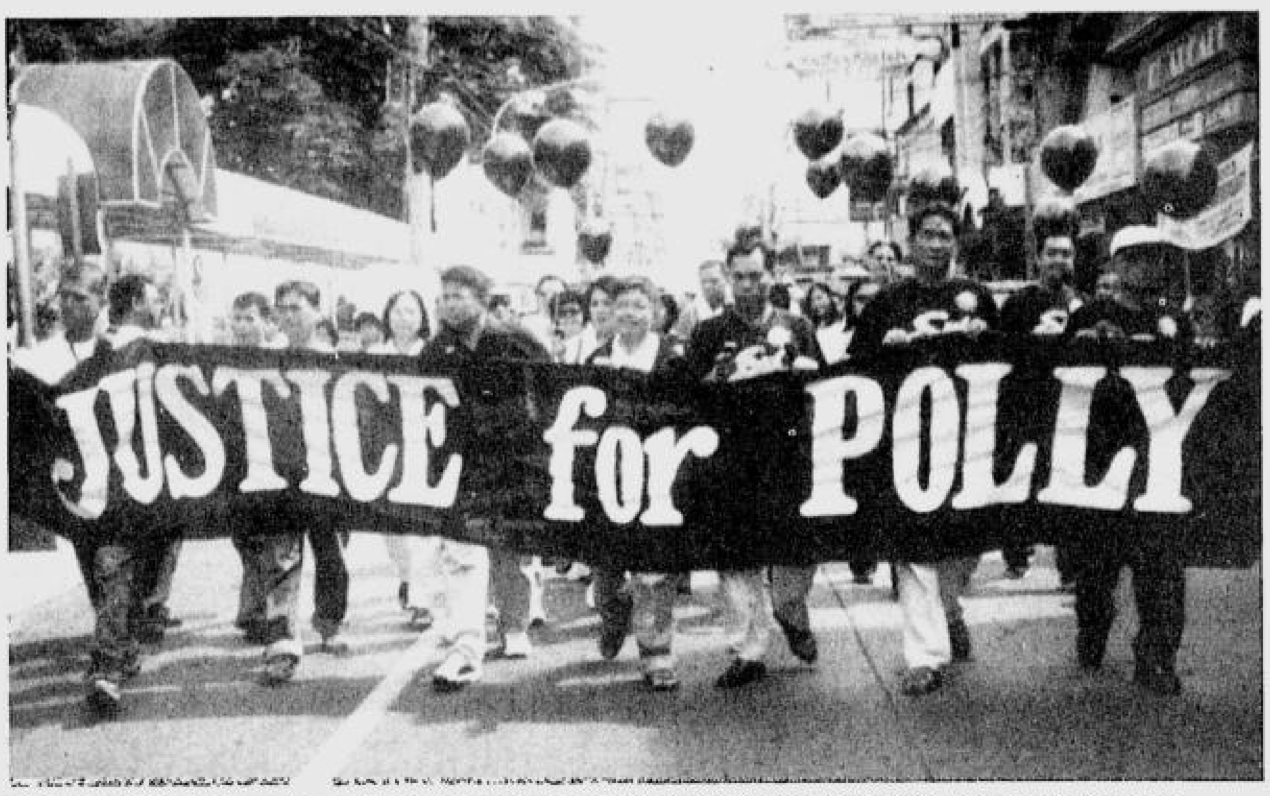


COLLEAGUES of slain radioman Apolinario Pobeda march in indignation over the killing on Quezon Avenue in Lucena City.

DELFIN MALLARI/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Media workers denounce killing

LUCENA CITY—It was the first anniversary of the controversial "Nosi Balasi" program over radio dwTI yesterday, but what the listeners heard were not the usual scathing commentaries from its three regular hosts.

Apolinario "Polly" Pobeda, who gave birth to the two-hour program in the late nineties, will be forever absent from his center seat inside the booth.

"Wherever my partner is, he will be forever with us as we continue the program," a teary-eyed James Magbuhos said at the Funeraria Pagbilao here where Pobeda's body lies.

"This day is really painful for me and Art Sante. How would you forget the time that we all spent together? We literally ate in one plate, sharing whatever breakfast food we had before we started our program. Then all of a sudden, it's now all gone," he said.

In a rare display of camaraderie, members of the fractious local media community marched together in indignation over the murder of Pobeda. The hard-hitting journalist was shot and killed by two motorcycle-riding men on May 17 on his way to the radio station.

Led by officials and members of the Quezon Tri-Media Group and the Camp Nakar Press Corps, at least 150 media workers, officials of the National Union of Journalists in the Philippines and sympathizers assembled at the patio of the St. Ferdinand Cathedral at around 9 a.m.

Wearing black arm bands and holding black balloons and a black streamer that read "Justice for Polly," they marched along Quezon Avenue and stopped at the site near the railroad crossing where Pobeda was gunned down.

In a statement, the NUJP said "42 journalists have been murdered in the Philippines since democracy was restored in 1986 and no one has been convicted for any of the slayings."

"Acts of outrage against journalists in the Philippines make a mockery of this nation's claim to democracy," it said. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Countdown for Justice

WAPILE

IT IS exactly 373 days today since Pagadian journalist Edgar Damalerio was slain in cold blood. The principal suspect, police officer Guillermo Wapile, remains at large after escaping while in the custody of the police.

CEBU SHOOTING

5 NBI agents, 8 others face raps

By Suzzane B. Salva, *PDI Visayas Bureau*

CEBU CITY—Multiple frustrated murder and double attempted murder charges have been filed against five agents of the National Bureau of Investigation in Cebu and eight alleged confidential agents involved in a bungled drug operation that resulted in the wounding of six resort workers.

Arrest warrants for the lawmen were being prepared yesterday, after the case filed by the Office of the Ombudsman in the Visayas was raffled Monday to Regional Trial Court Branch 56, presided by Judge Augustine Vestil, in Mandaue City.

Vestil is, however, on leave. His pairing judge, Ulric Cañete, will temporarily take over the case.

Anticipating the issuance of the arrest warrants, four of the 13 respondents—NBI senior agent Angelito Magno and alleged CAs Paul Lauro, David Pantano Jr. and Allan Magallon—filed separate motions asking the court to hold the orders in abeyance.

Also charged were NBI-Cebu special investigators Arnel Pura, Danilo Garay, Rey Tumalon and Teodoro Saavedra and civilians Joey Cal, Lex Eric Ayag, Noe Dimaunahan, Rick Cruz and a certain Boy Soon. The Ombudsman recommended bail of P200,000 each.

Six employees of Plantation Bay Resort, who were returning home from a Christmas party, were wounded when NBI agents mistook them for drug pushers and fired at their van on Dec. 13 last year in Mandaue.

The Ombudsman released the results of a five-month investigation last week, saying the lawmen were criminally liable for the botched operation. It ordered the dismissal from service of the five NBI agents for grave misconduct and the six-month suspension of then NBI-Cebu Director Romulo Manapsal.

Magno and Cal sought reconsideration of the criminal resolution of Visayas Ombudsman Director Virginia Santiago.

Lawyer Joey Luis Wee, who is representing Magno, said that as a matter of procedure, no warrant would be issued pending the court's resolution on their motion.

Wee also asked the court to defer the arraignment pending resolution of his client's motion for reconsideration.

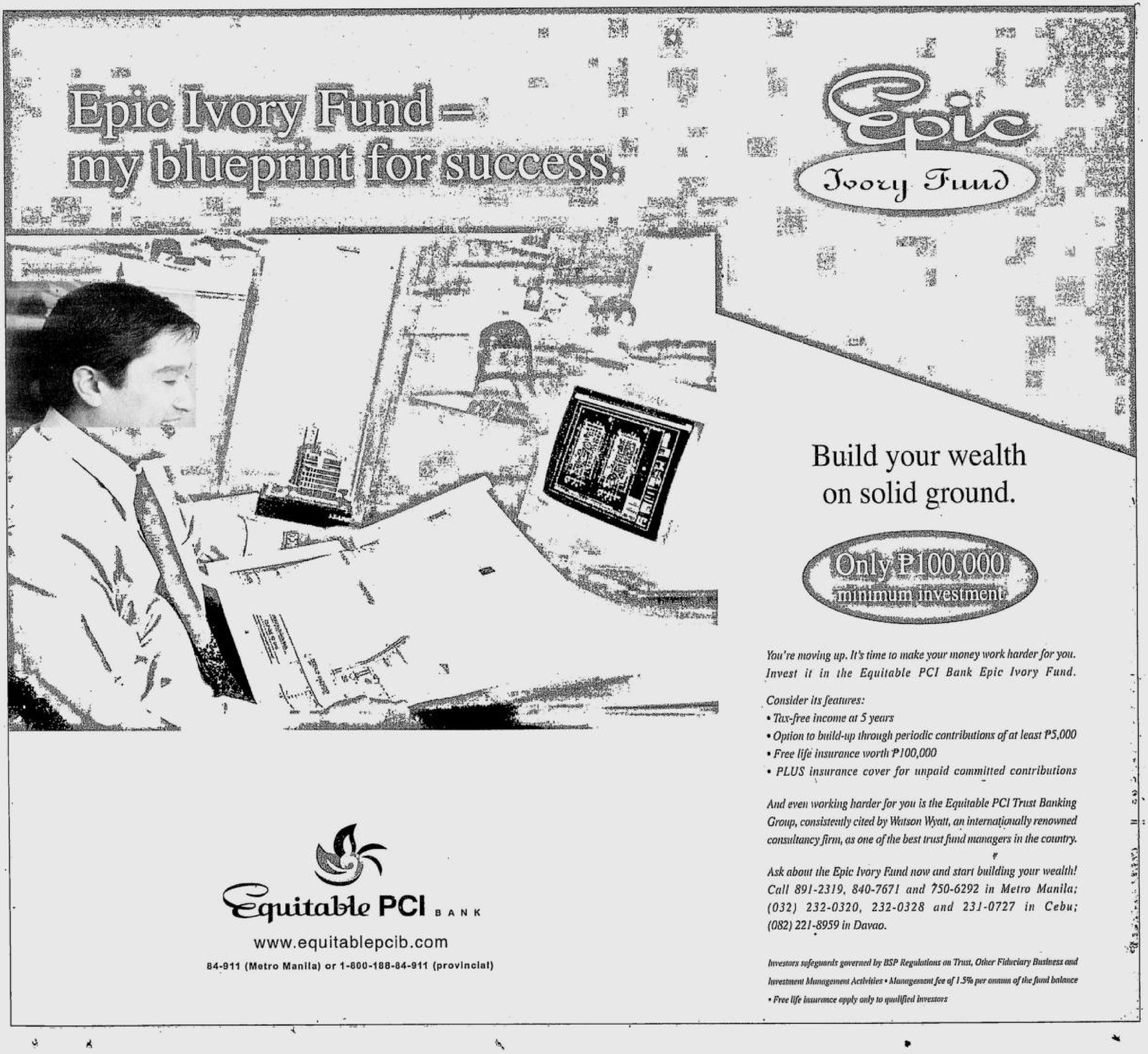
"If the arraignment will continue, my client will be forced to enter a plea and he would be considered to have waived his right to question and assail the resolution. That is why we don't like the arraignment to proceed," he said.

Lawyer Clarence Paul Oaminal, who is representing Lauro, also informed the court of their pending motion for reconsideration before the anti-graft office.

Wee insisted that there was no conspiracy, contrary to the Ombudsman's findings, pointing out that Magno was found negative for powder burns and could not have fired at the L-300 van of the resort workers.

He also noted that Magno even brought the victims to the hospital and submitted himself to a paraffin test on the same day.

Lawyer Lolito Borbajo, who is representing Cal, questioned the theory of conspiracy and insisted that his client was not present "physically and mentally" when the incident took place.



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5-POINT COURSE OF ACTION

MNLF seeks OIC help on peace pact compliance

By Charlie C. Señase
PDI Mindanao Bureau

COTABATO CITY—The mainstream Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) has urged the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to facilitate the implementation of its 1996 peace agreement with the government.

Muslimin Sema, MNLF secretary general and mayor of this city, enumerated a five-point course of action that the influential OIC may undertake in order to realize and benefit from the full implementation of the peace accord that was forged through its mediation.

In a six-page report to the OIC, Sema cited the need for the Islamic body to "initiate talks with Malacañang" in order to determine the "policy direction" that the national leadership was undertaking in compliance with the accord.

"The OIC must exert political, economic and moral pressures to remind Malacañang of its genuine concern and interest for the welfare of Muslims in the Southern Philippines," he said. His group is also lobbying for more aid "for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of war-torn Mindanao."

Sema, who is also chair of Central Mindanao's development council, criticized the national government for its alleged lapses in rebuilding Mindanao and its inhabitants.

"We are not satisfied with the (government's) implementation process," he stressed. "We sense deception and each passing year only erases a piece of hope that we rationally cling to."

The proposed Mini-Marshall Plan of the government that was meant to uplift the socio-economic conditions of Muslims have not been carried out.

"The Mini-Marshall Plan for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of MNLF communities devastated by war has never been realized," observed Sema. "Up to now, we are still waiting."

Except for the integration into the military and police of some MNLF fighters, provisions in the peace agreement have yet to be implemented, he said.

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Experts urge fishing ban in dam reservoir

BAGUIO CITY—Concerns about toxic compounds in the reservoir of the San Roque Multipurpose Dam Project (SRMDP) have compelled government experts to urge a ban on poaching and fishing in the facility.

In a 12-page report, the Agno River Basin Commission asked the San Roque Power Corp. and the National Power Corp. to regulate the entry of Pangasinan fishermen to the 12.8-square-kilometer wide reservoir area, which had been stocked recently with *tilapia* and carp.

Rosalio Goze, the ARBC consultant who wrote the final report, said the government was studying the compounds flowing downstream of the Agno River, whose path intersects with the tailings dams of the Philex Mining Corp. and two older dams, as well as several communities in Benguet.

Goze said 850 million cubic meters of impounded water from the Agno might not have thoroughly undergone the dam's filtering system because the reservoir had just been used recently.

The SRPC started operating the facility in May, 11 months earlier than the contracted development period. The firm started impounding Agno River water in January.

"In the last two months, I received reports (from foresters in San Manuel, Pangasinan, and Itogon, Benguet) that fishermen have been harvesting up to 100 kilograms of *tilapia* for their community markets, but we don't know the conditions of these daily catch. The SRPC is still studying the filtering system and the condition of its reservoir waters so we don't know how toxic the fish caught there are," Goze said.

The reservoir *tilapia* was introduced by local government units, apparently in breach of a proposed master plan for the dam's social and livelihood components, Goze said.

"No agency had developed a system for harvesting the fish for commercial purposes. Apparently, the *tilapia* was stocked to accommodate a photo opportunity. I am still designing the proposed ecological park that should guide the administrators in managing the Itogon Watershed (which covers the reservoir system)," Goze said.

But this early, several people have set up camps at the mouth and the ridges of the reservoir to fish. Goze said authorities have not identified the poachers. Officials suspect that most of them hail from Pangasinan where more than 2,000 dwellers have been displaced by the dam's construction. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Fish kill feared in Zambales

IBA, Zambales—Officials of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources have expressed fear over the possible outbreak of fish kill due to the proliferation of illegal fish cages at the Oyon Bay marine reserve area in Masinloc town.

Remedios Ongtangco, BFAR regional director, said the quality of the municipal waters of Masinloc and nearby Palauig would deteriorate if fish pen and cage operators would continue building structures in the area.

The marine reserve of Oyon Bay has been declared a protected area under the National Integrated Protected Area System (Nipas) and is governed by the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB).

Ongtangco said the establishment of fish cages within the protected area was illegal and undermined the Nipas law.

She cited a Department of Environment and Natural Resources study showing that owners of fish cages and pens in the area were operating without the required environmental compliance certificate (ECC) and a permit from the PAMB.

She said investigation also showed that Masinloc and Palauig officials had issued permits or lease contracts to at least 20 fish cage operators in their towns. At least 190 illegal fishing structures were found in the reserve.

Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk

5-POINT COURSE OF ACTION

MNLF seeks OIC help on peace pact compliance

By Charlie C. Señase
PDI Mindanao Bureau

COTABATO CITY—The mainstream Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) has urged the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to facilitate the implementation of its 1996 peace agreement with the government.

Muslimin Sema, MNLF secretary general and mayor of this city, enumerated a five-point course of action that the influential OIC may undertake in order to realize and benefit from the full implementation of the peace accord that was forged through its mediation.

In a six-page report to the OIC, Sema cited the need for the Islamic body to "initiate talks with Malacañang" in order to determine the "policy direction" that the national leadership was undertaking in compliance with the accord.

"The OIC must exert political, economic and moral pressures to remind Malacañang of its genuine concern and interest for the welfare of Muslims in the Southern Philippines," he said. His group is also lobbying for more aid "for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of war-torn Mindanao."

Sema, who is also chair of Central Mindanao's development council, criticized the national government for its alleged lapses in rebuilding Mindanao and its inhabitants.

"We are not satisfied with the (government's) implementation process," he stressed. "We sense deception and each passing year only erases a piece of hope that we rationally cling to."

The proposed Mini-Marshall Plan of the government that was meant to uplift the socio-economic conditions of Muslims have not been carried out.

"The Mini-Marshall Plan for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of MNLF communities devastated by war has never been realized," observed Sema. "Up to now, we are still waiting."

Except for the integration into the military and police of some MNLF fighters, provisions in the peace agreement have yet to be implemented, he said.

Sema also chided the government for abolishing the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development and the Southern Philippines Development Authority, the agencies tasked with monitoring and implementing livelihood projects of former MNLF rebels and their dependents.

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SARS survivor back home

By Madonna Virola
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

CALAPAN CITY—A Filipina domestic helper who survived the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) virus in Hong Kong last February is now back in her home village here.

She arrived in Barangay Sta. Rita here on May 11 with her sister and is now with her family.

ML, single and in her 20s, had ended her contract with her employer because she wanted to be with her family.

Their other sister has to continue working in HK in order to support ML's expenses as well as those of the other members of the family.

While in Hong Kong, ML said her employer sent her on an errand to a hospital where there was a case of SARS infection.

She became seriously ill, showing signs and symptoms of SARS, and was confined at the Prince of Wales Hospital last March 13.

That was many days ahead of another Filipina, Adela Dalingay, who died of SARS last March 24.

In Calapan City, her family, relatives and friends prayed very hard, day and night, for her complete recovery, which was realized after weeks of treatment in Hong Kong.

She was made to stay in a hotel in Hong Kong after she was discharged from the hospital.

Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas said ML has fully recovered.

When ML was about return to Calapan City, Barangay Sta. Rita officials have sought the advice and assistance of the Calapan Task Force Against SARS led by city health officer Basilisa Llanto.

The village is known as "Hong Kong Village" because majority of the people there work as domestic helpers in Hong Kong.

They immediately organized a community assembly, which was attended by around 50 families.

"The barangay people themselves monitor cases of SARS," Llanto said.

As participants became enlightened with the lectures on SARS, those who had been to Hong Kong during its outbreak went on voluntary confinement.

ML was welcomed and quarantined by the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration and the Department of Health's National Epidemiology Center.

Dr. Aurora Daluro told Llanto, who coordinated the coming of ML, not to worry because the Hong Kong government would inform them ahead of time of the health measures to be taken.

Although ML had been declared SARS-free, local officials have taken "proactive measures" on all possible SARS cases.

SARS IMPACT

Planned Cebu-China flights suspended

By Irene R. Sino-Cruz
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Air Philippines suspended its plan to put up chartered flights between Cebu and China following the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

Patty Chiong, senior vice president for marketing, sales and administration of Air Philippines, said the company has postponed its plan to offer chartered flights between Cebu and Guangdong, China.

"We're supposed to introduce the Cebu-Guangdong (flight) this year," Chiong said.

The company came up with the decision after the outbreak of SARS resulted in a huge drop of passenger load, she said.

Last year, Chiong said Air Philippines saw the potential of the Cebu-Guangdong market due to the presence of a huge Chinese community in Cebu.

The Philippine government was scheduled to have bilateral air talks with China and Japan to discuss additional landing rights, Chiong said.

The airline's flights to Hong Kong via Laoag have also been adversely affected by SARS, she added.

"We used to have flights to Hong Kong three to five times a week. Now, we reduced frequency and at times we have no flight," she said.

Although the airline's international operations have been affected by the decline in travel, she said, the domestic operations made up for the loss in revenues.

The airline has been offering extra flights to Kalibo and other domestic destinations popular among tourists, she said.

At present, she said, Cebu, Bohol, Kalibo and Palawan are the most popular destinations for tourists.

On the other hand, she said, the airline would still like to have international flights between Cebu and destinations within Asia such as China and Japan.

"Wherever there is a demand, we will start serving the destination with charter flights. If we feel that the route is viable, we will have regular runs," she said.

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Magsaysay taps youth in anti-poverty fight

LOS BAÑOS, Laguna—The country needs young men and women to wage war against poverty.

In a program at the University of the Philippines here, Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. challenged some 800 participants of the Young Farmers Program (YFP) to lead the battle against poverty.

Magsaysay, chair of the Congressional Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization (COCAFM), said there is a looming need to infuse "an army of young blood and youthful dynamism into an industry whose workforce is 45 years old on the average."

He was referring to agriculture in the country that is now maintained mostly by aging farmers.

"The army, I envision is equipped with tools and techniques. They will be trained not only (by) the agriculture department but also with the private sector to provide them with better education on agriculture and fisheries," Magsaysay told the INQUIRER.

YFP is projected to promote the advancement of fisheries and agriculture by encouraging students, graduates and young entrepreneurs to engage in small-scale agribusiness activities.

The program has an initial funding of P50 million from the annual budget of the Department of Agriculture.

Magsaysay said the program has two components: The Young Farmers Entrepreneurship where young businessmen can avail themselves of financial loan of up to P50,000, and the Young Farmer Volunteers where schools and other academic institutions would act as agents for students willing to undergo field training. Participants will then be deployed to regions for six months.

"These volunteers shall be transformed into young farmer entrepreneurs. They will be the leaders. Funding would be provided for them as soon as their proposal is approved," Magsaysay added.

The senator, chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, also sees the project as a spur to agricultural technology that would enhance production in poverty-stricken areas in the rural areas and help increase farmers' income.

Meanwhile, Tarlac Rep. Jesli Lapus said the government should ensure that safety nets are in place before the full implementation of the trade liberalization as projected in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

"We have less than two years to place our safety nets to protect our local market. We should do it at once because we don't have the luxury of time," Lapus stated.

Lapus, a member of the COCAFM, said they are looking into other ways to protect local business from the influx of cheaper imported agriculture products.

The COCAFM had already started consultations with small vegetable farmers in Benguet, Lapus said. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

ROUNDUP

Cops face dismissal

TARLAC CITY—Four policemen are facing summary dismissal from service for allegedly firing their guns in the presence of Mayor Genaro Mendoza during the barangay fiesta here on May 15. Supt. Tito Bayangos, police chief here, said they are investigating SPO3 Delfin Tadifa, SPO3 Pepito Datang, SPO1 Leo Belarmino and SPO1 Pablo Lumba for misbehavior in Barangay Atioc. Reports showed that the policemen were drunk when they fired their guns.

Ronaldo Dizon, PDI Central Luzon Desk

New bridge

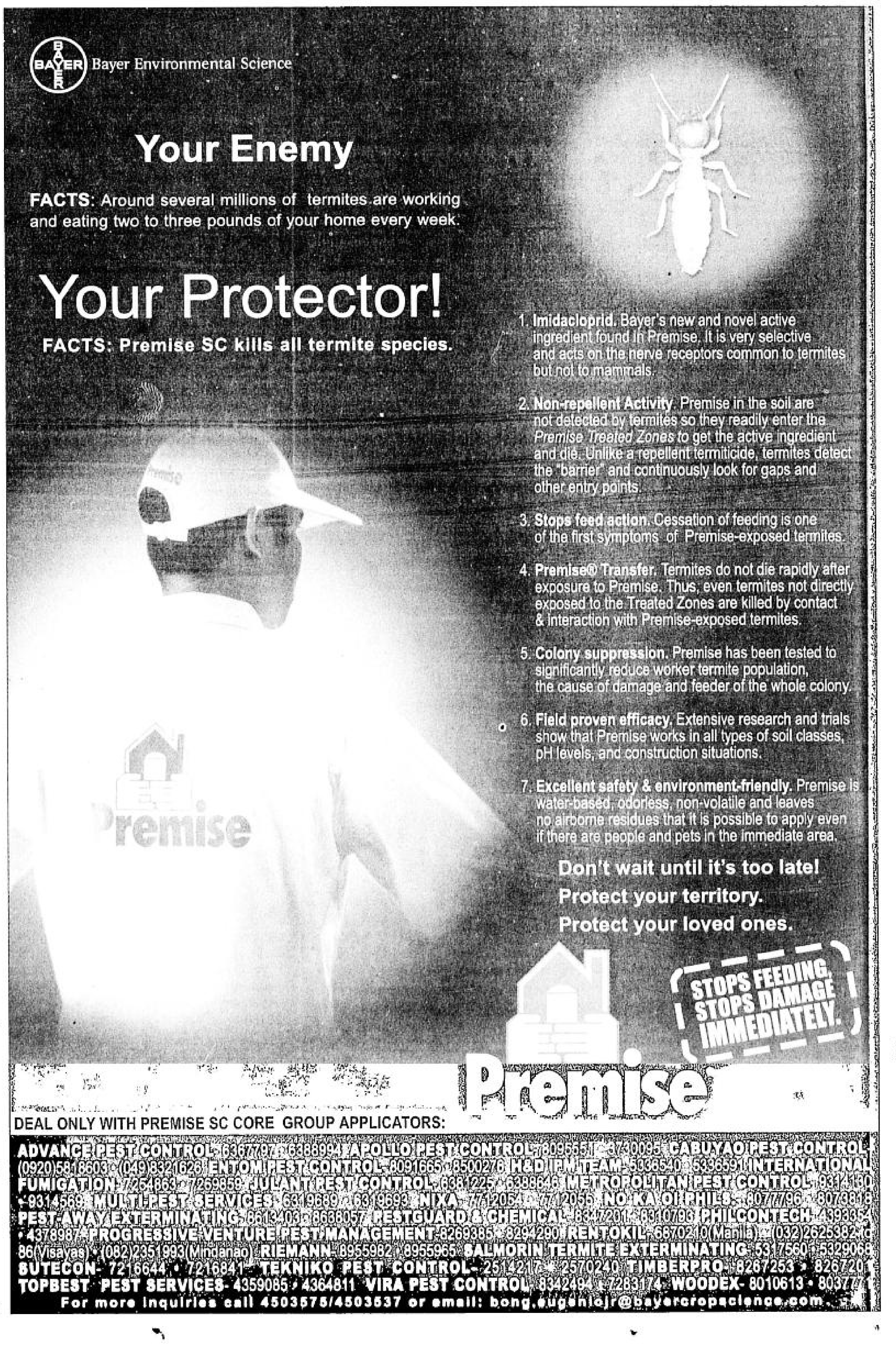
CABANATUAN CITY—A 510-meter bridge to span across the Pampanga River will be built to give motorists passing through this city an alternate route to evade the usually heavy traffic in the downtown area here. Mayor Julius Cesar Vergara said the P142.8-million bridge will be completed in 360 days. It will have three lanes and will be wider than the Gen. Antonio Luna Bridge on Maharlika Highway also spanning across the Pampanga River.

Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Machineries expo

SCIENCE CITY OF MUÑOZ—An international exposition on postharvest and agricultural machineries will be held here on May 26-30 as part of the 25th anniversary celebration of the Bureau of Postharvest Research and Extension. Ricardo Cachuela, BPRE executive director, said the latest innovations and state of the art technologies in agriculture will be showcased during the five-day celebration. There will also be symposia on postharvest handling and processing on grains, and others, he said.

Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk



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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor **Jun Bandayrel**
Bureau Chief **Rolando B. Fernandez**

RITUAL prayers open this year's Imbayah festival in Banaue, Ifugao.

DIFFERENT variations of headdresses made of tree bark are displayed. Women wear shell caps strapped together by bark rope, while men wear caps woven around actual tree branches.

Coping with changes in urbanizing Banaue

Text by Vincent Cabreza
Photos by EV Espiritu

FIRST-TIME audiences of the 34th Imbayah Festival in Banaue, Ifugao, famous for its centuries-old rice terraces, would have been disappointed by the changes in the urbanizing town.

Ifugao youths were photographed painting their almond-colored bodies with Pentel pen tattoos to approximate the indigenous scarring of 12th century Cam-bu-lo warriors at the borders of Ifugao and Mt. Province.

Contenders in the *bultung* (wrestling), *burong* (foot wrestling) or *balittugan* (knee wrestling) scramble over the stage with their white underwear peeking out of their red-and-black striped g-strings.

At one point, wrestlers were being timed by a g-string-wearing referee using a cellular phone.

But Gov. Teodoro Baguilat Jr. insists that these contemporary fixtures do not necessarily represent the end of the rice terraces culture but rather its resurgence.

The youths, Baguilat said, have joined the parades and mingled with the elders in a show of self-discovery.

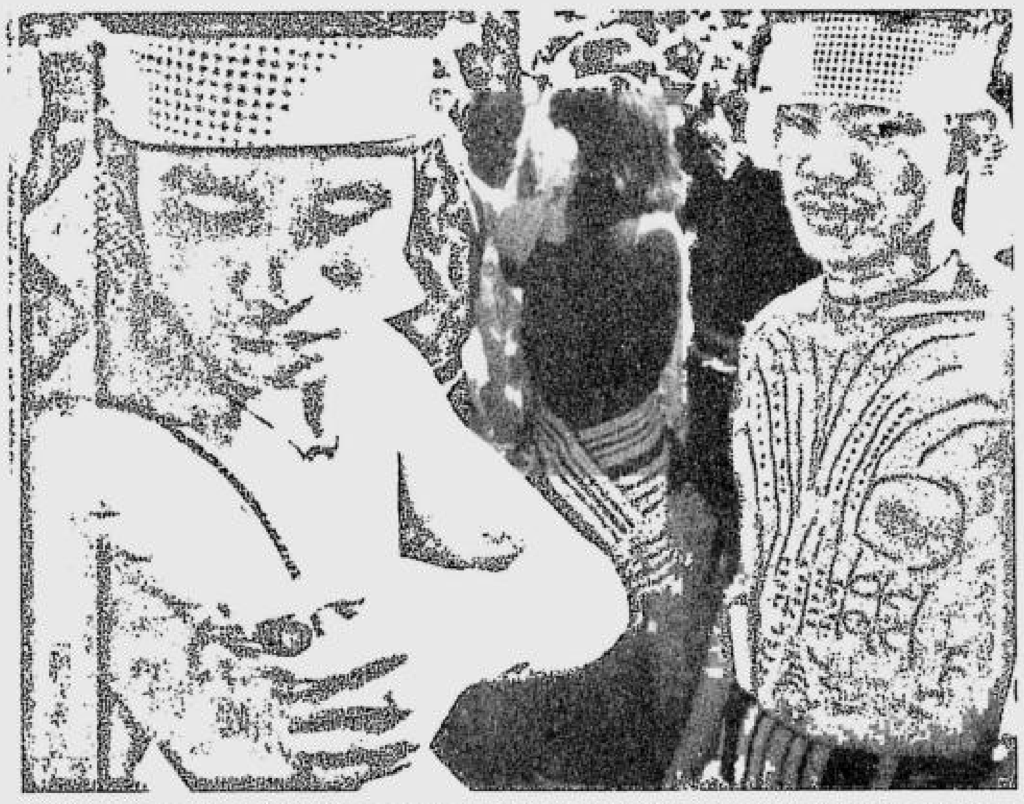
The fate of the Ifugao's rice terraces had long relied on resources of the government, after the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) classified these ancient Filipino artifacts as among the world's endangered heritage sites.

Despite the government's efforts at marketing the World Heritage site as a tourism destination and as an agricultural marvel, fairly little impact has been made at restoring these engineering structures.

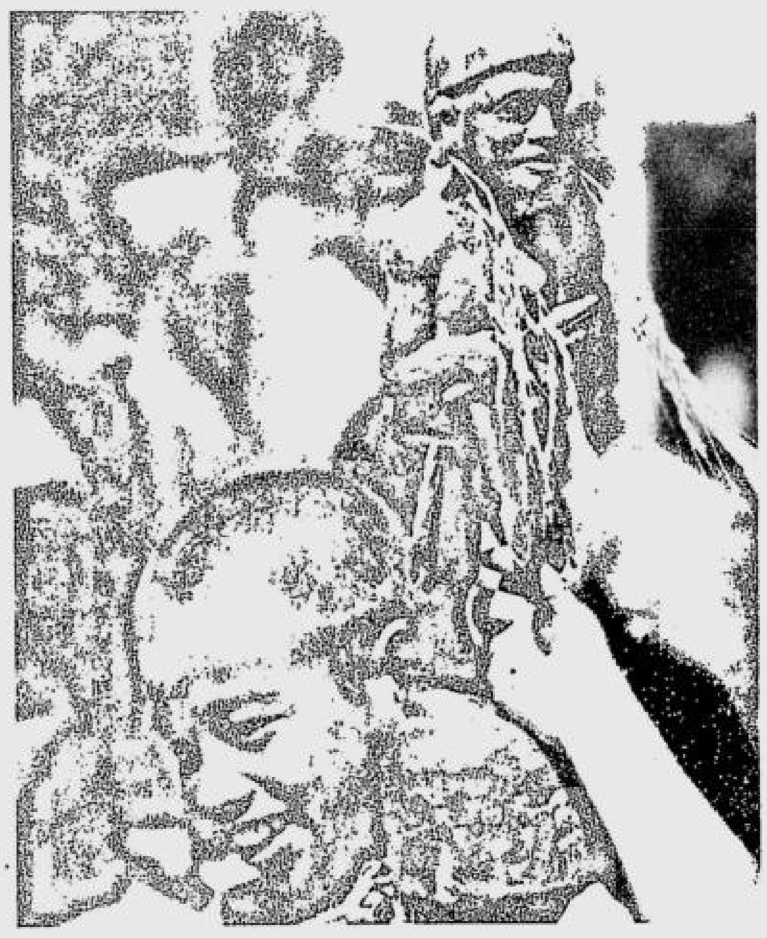
Baguilat, in an earlier interview, said restoring Ifugao's rice culture appeared to be the only option left open to the province, after acknowledging that the rice terraces had long thrived on a healthy interaction between the *tinawon* (literally once a year) rice variety and the community's spiritual and animist roots.

The *tinawon* is ground and fermented into the *bayah* (rice wine), which communities of Banaue, Kiangan, Lagawe and Hungduan offer to the Ifugao deities to obtain good harvests, cure their sick and establish rapport with their neighbors.

Only by restoring the value of *bayah* to these towns would new generations of Ifugao unite to protect their ancestral artifacts, Baguilat said.



TEENAGERS paint ancient tattoos on their bodies using markers, as they prepare to join the festival parade.



THE "BULUL" (rice god) takes center stage as one of the most important figures in Ifugao culture.

HAFALLA: "This is my contribution for the people." FRANK CALLAGHAN

Bringing back culture to culture

By Paulo Rafael Subido
Sagada, Mt. Province

BAGUIO-based photographer Tommy Hafalla has made it his personal mission to document the rich culture of the Cordillera and has been doing so for over two decades.

Having given up his future career as an aviation engineer during the 1970s to answer the call of the mountains that he calls home was a step worthy of praise.

Hafalla has since earned various accolades from his contemporaries throughout the years, and for good reason. His photographs not only capture the essence and beauty of the upland people and their practices, but his purpose sheds a little more light into what it takes to be behind the lens.

With his work, Hafalla hopes to encourage younger generations to participate in the rituals of the elders and perpetuate the traditions.

"Bring culture back to the culture is what I want to do," he says. "Who knows, a year-old boy may not know about his culture 10 to 15 years from now."

Hafalla's latest exhibit, titled "Begnas (Id Malingeb)," which opened at Yoghurt House in Sagada, Mt. Province on May 10, is a collection of photographs that document the centuries-old tradition of *begnas*, a rice ritual in Mt. Province.

The *begnas* festival happens thrice a year based on the agricultural cycle. This particular one, which is the subject of Hafalla's photographs, is called the "Panagbenga" and literally translates to "before the rice will bring up grain." This is the original Panagbenga of the Mt. Province and a *begnas* is performed in the hopes of a good and fruitful harvest.

Rice ritual

It is important to note that this ritual is connected with rice and not flowers, so it shouldn't be mistaken with Baguio City's flower festival, which itself is an event that was conceptualized only a few years ago and is a "dated" event.

Hafalla shares that up in Sagada, the *begnas* festival isn't marked on the calendar beforehand. There are certain omens that the elders pay attention to, such as the appearance of a certain migratory bird in the area and the positioning of the sun as it rises and sets. When nature gives its sign, that is when the festival begins.

Hafalla was granted access to parts of the ritual that not everyone can see. The exhibit showcases the opening prayer of the *begnas* held at the *pat-patayan* or sacred tree, located in an isolated place. Only a few representatives from all 12 *dap-ay* in Sagada participate in this event, and Hafalla was lucky enough be a part of it.

Hafalla has been interacting with the elders without a camera for a long time now, and he shares that it is important to first start a rapport with them and be accepted into the community before merely shooting away.

This wasn't difficult for him though, as the elders soon accepted what he was doing, so the next generation would know that these rituals are a part of their culture.

"I have been documenting the Cordillera for a long time," Hafalla says. "So what I'm doing is for the people. This is my contribution. The documentation is for them and to give them thanks because I was welcomed into the community of the mountain. It is because of them that I came up with these images."

"My plan is to leave the photographs for the people," he adds.

When I first walked into Yoghurt House, Hafalla introduced me to one of the elders, Lakay Padingi Bumadang, who was clutching a photograph of him wearing his native attire. He was beaming with pride as he held his picture up for me to see.

"A lot of photographers come up here for documenting," Hafalla says. "They take shots with a promise that they will give their subjects copies without doing so. I made it a point to always give them copies. I was so happy that he was appreciating the photo and liked it very much."

Lanao official refugee count hits 19,000

THE OFFICIAL refugee count has reached almost 19,000, and two ranking Moro Islamic Liberation Front leaders had escaped during the takeover of Munai town in Lanao del Norte. But Malacañang said the military's "selective" attacks on various MILF lairs have thus far been "successful."

"We hope it (the campaign) could be concluded within the next few days with zero civilian casualties," Presidential Chief of Staff Rigoberto Tiglao said.

Yesterday, the military's aerial, artillery and ground assault continued in one province, Lanao del Norte, and Armed Forces officials said the number of dead rebels has risen to 118.

AFP spokesperson Lt. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia also said government forces have flushed out about 300 MILF rebels who had occupied Munai.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu acknowledged the Moro separatist group faced military bombardments but denied sustaining heavy casualties. He said there have been no major ground engagements yet.

"We don't have casualties," Kabalu told Agence France Presse by phone.

Asked how many had been displaced by the fighting, Garcia said: "Around 18,000 heads. Fighting is still ongoing and they are evacuated in towns in Lanao del Sur."

Yesterday, the Department of Social Welfare and Development in Northern Mindanao met with military officials yesterday and discussed the status of 3,243 families—a total of 18,891 people—displaced by the military action.

'Don't blame military'

In Congress, five Mindanao representatives dared critics of the ongoing military offensive against the Moro rebels to "come up with their own bright ideas" on how the government can protect the civilian population from terrorism.

"All their political rhetoric to date (has) done nothing to stop the Moro Islamic Liberation Front's terror campaign," their joint statement read.

The five—Reps. Prospero Pichay of Surigao del Sur, Robert Ace Barbers of Surigao del Norte, Alipio Badelles of Lanao del Norte, Prospero Nograles of Davao City and Celso Lobregat of Zamboanga City—said it was "timely" for the Armed Forces to "demonstrate that it still has the capability to crush the MILF."

Vigilantes or para-military groups might reemerge if the AFP is "prevented from performing its Constitutional mandate of protecting the people," they warned.

Apparently referring to the damage the renewed offensive has wrought on civilian lives and property, they said such "collateral damage" is a "sad, necessary evil" if the government is to contain MILF elements who target even non-military facilities.

Pichay, as quoted in the statement, urged fellow politicians to "refrain from blaming the military for the violence in Mindanao."

Reacting to a statement made by Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. on Monday, Pichay said the senator's branding of the AFP operations as "state-sponsored terrorism does not wash because it is the military that is protecting our people from the depredations of the MILF terrorists."

Ilocos Norte Rep. Imee Marcos sounded the alarm over a purported Palace document indicating that the military was behind the recent spate of terror bombings in Mindanao.

The document—titled "The President's Four-Point Framework in Addressing the Southern Philippines Secessionists/MILF Problem"—bears the purported signature of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, Eduardo Ermita.

But as early as May 7, Ermita, through the Office of the Press Secretary, already denied signing such a document and dismissed it as a hoax meant to undermine the peace process.

Escaped leaders

Garcia identified the two escaped leaders as Commanders Bravo and Yaya.

Bravo or Abdurahman Macapaar is the overall head of the MILF in Lanao del Norte, while Yaya is Yanyah Laksadatu.

"We have already taken the base camp of Commander Bravo in the Munai area. However, Commander Bravo and Commander Yaya were able to escape," Garcia told defense reporters.

Government troops, he added, were now pursuing the two who withdrew to the area of Mt. Gurain near Munai.

Garcia said the two MILF leaders have a total of around 250 to 300 rebels with them.

He said the pursuit operations were hampered by bad weather.

Garcia also said the military was trying to clear the area after it was reported that the rebels had left behind anti-personnel mines.

Two divisions

In Zamboanga City, Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Roy Kyamko said two infantry divisions were now running after "erring MILF members and leaders."

The two divisions are composed of six brigades. A brigade is composed of three battalions, with each battalion having a strength of 500 to 800 soldiers.

The soldiers in Zamboanga del Norte, Kyamko said, are after MILF members who are responsible in the Siocon attack.

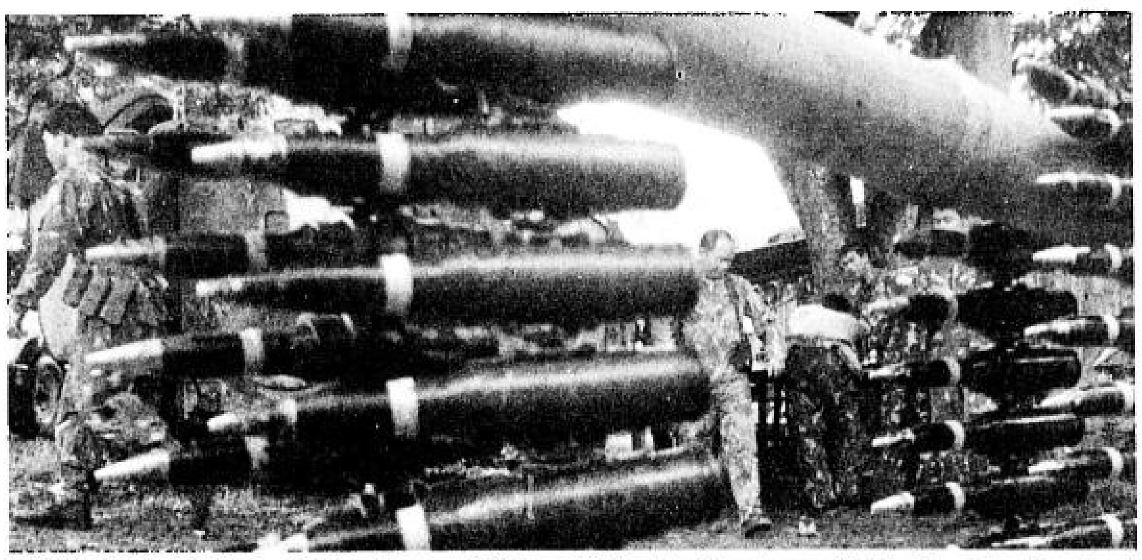
The rebels, he said, are holed up inside the Sipakit Complex in Sirawai town.

Kyamko said launching air assaults would be difficult "because we are experiencing very bad weather and the configuration of the terrain is so difficult for ground artillery."

Maj. Gen. Cristolito Balaoing, chief of the 4th Infantry Division, told the INQUIRER that yesterday's fighting was not as "intense" as in the past days. Fighting was still ongoing in Pantao Ragat town, he noted.

Balaoing also announced that government soldiers have occupied the house of MILF 5th Division commander Yahyah Lacsadatu in Barangay Poblacion in Munai, Lanao del Norte.

With this, he declared Munai and its adjacent localities "completely secured." *AFP, Martin Marfil, Volt Contreras; Grace Cantal-Albasin, Edwin O. Fernandez, Jeffrey P. Maningo and Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



"CENTER of terrorist operations in Lanao del Norte," is how the Southcom chief, Lt. Gen. Roy Kyamko, describes Camp Munai, which had been captured by government troops. EDWIN BACASMAS

MILF not prepared

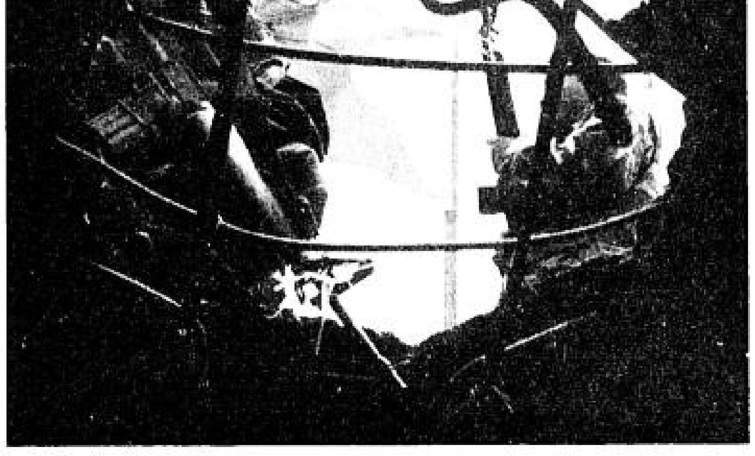
THE MILF admitted it was not prepared for the government's renewed campaign, but vowed to fight back if attacked.

"We are not prepared for this (war). There will be no reprisal on our part, but if attacked, we will put up a defense," Ghazali Jaafar, MILF vice chair for political affairs, said in an interview with Radio Mindanao Network-dxDC in Davao City yesterday.

Jaafar also said the MILF was disturbed by reports that vigilante groups in North Cotabato were arming themselves to kill Moro people.

"This is alarming," Jaafar said, adding that this may fuel a Christian-Muslim war in Mindanao.

"If the government will use the Ilagas, that would be a blunder," he said.



THE BOMBING of "selected" sites made this hole on the concrete house of MILF commander, Yanyah Laksadatu in Munai town, Lanao del Norte. The commander and his men eluded government troops. EDWIN BACASMAS

'If they can convert . . .'

From page A1

"With or without that, the strikes have been going on," he said.

Ghazali Jaafar, MILF vice chair for political affairs, told Radio Mindanao Network-dxDC in Davao City yesterday that despite the renewed hostilities, the MILF remained committed to a peaceful political solution of the Mindanao problem.

Jaafar also expressed optimism that his group would not be included in the list of terrorist organizations because until now the government had not totally severed ties with the MILF.

"Otherwise, they would have cut off all ties with the MILF," he said in Filipino.

Proof needed

But the government said it would not stop the ongoing operations against the MILF until the separatist group proved it was sincere in wanting peace.

"We wish that the statement given by the MILF to the (Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines) that they are also against the conduct of terrorist activities could be proven on the ground," Eduardo Ermita, presidential adviser on the peace process, said in a press briefing at the Malacañang "war room" yesterday.

The MILF should declare that it would end its "terrorist activities," and that it would help bring to justice the perpetrators of the attacks in Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte, and in Maigo, Lanao del Norte, and the bombings in Davao City and Koronadal City, Ermita said.

He said the government was willing to dialogue with MILF representatives in talks sponsored by the CBCP or by the Muslim ulama (religious leaders).

"But we need to see some signs of sincerity on the ground before a decision is reached on the matter," Ermita stressed.

The P5 million bounty for MILF leader Salamat Hashim and each of his four top aides still stands, he said, because Salamat and his aides are "still very much in the country."

US warned

In another interview, Kabalu warned the United States against helping the AFP in actual combat against the rebels.

He said the MILF would not harm US troops if they did not actively help in the government's fight against the MILF.

"But if they help the government, that is another story. We cannot just sit down and allow them to kill us. That would be illogical," Kabalu told Agence France Presse by phone.

Kabalu also denied allegations by the government that it was engaged in terrorist activities, and accused the military of often instigating the fighting.

The MILF has been waging a rebellion for the establishment of an Islamic state in Mindanao since 1978.

Surrender

Meanwhile, an MILF leader and 13 of his men surrendered on Saturday to the government.

Brig. Gen. Agustin Dema-ala, 301st Army Brigade chief based in Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat, identified the MILF leader as Abdulazziz Mamadla, alias Commander Tropical.

Dema-ala said Tropical led the 3rd Battalion of the MILF's 103rd Brigade operating in the triboundary of Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat and North Cotabato.

He said Tropical and his men surrendered five high-powered firearms.

Dema-ala said lack of food, uncertainties and discontentment with the MILF leadership prompted the rebels to give up.

"Tropical told us during the tactical interrogation that they were already tired of fighting for a lost cause. The children of MILF leaders live in comfort and are studying in exclusive schools, while the children of ordinary MILF fighters are starving and (can) hardly go to school," Dema-ala said.

But Kabalu denied that Tropical was even a member of the MILF.

"MILF has no field commander in the name of Tropical. It (surrender) could be part of military propaganda," Kabalu said. *With reports from Dona Pazzibugan; AP, AFP; Aquiles Zonio, Grace Cantal-Albasin, Edwin Fernandez, Jeffrey Maningo and Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

US, RP vow to crush Abus 'once and for all'

From page A1

government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

"The President and I also reviewed the developments with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the MILF. That group must abandon the path of violence. If it does so, and addresses its grievances through peaceful negotiations, then the United States will provide diplomatic and financial support to a renewed peace process," Bush said in his opening statement in a joint press conference with Ms Macapagal following their meeting at the Oval Office.

Without mentioning the Balikatan 03-1 exercises already planned for Sulu by name, Bush said he had agreed with Ms Macapagal that an unspecified number of American troops would be deployed to "support" an anti-Abu Sayyaf operation.

"The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to destroy the Abu Sayyaf (ASG) group once and for all," a joint statement they issued read.

"Toward that end, President Bush and President (Macapagal) Arroyo agreed to hold another joint military activity in the near term, in which the United States will provide support to ongoing Armed Forces of the Philippines-led operations against the ASG."

Defense officials from both countries had failed to agree in February on a similar plan to deploy about 1,750 US troops to aid government soldiers.

Peace talks

Ms Macapagal did not spell out exactly how Bush envisions the role of the United States in any resumption of peace talks between the government and the MILF.

But she clarified that it would not "supplant" the role played by Malaysia in the on-again, off-again peace process.

Ms Macapagal said that as early as two years ago, Bush told her that the United States would "help in the way we want it to be."

The government this month had scrapped planned talks with the MILF, but Malacañang quoted Ms Macapagal as saying there was "always room for peace for those who turn their backs on terrorism."

Bush said US aid for the peace process depended on whether the MILF abandons violence and chooses "a peaceful reconciliation of issues."

But he also warned: "If they continue to want to use terror and force, we will be involved to the extent that the President invites us to be involved, within the (limits of the) Constitution of the Philippine government."

In the joint briefing, Ms Macapagal justified her recent order for "selective" shelling and bombardment of identified MILF areas, following raids on town centers conducted by MILF rebels.

Bombardment was the most "forthright way" to deal with the MILF, she said.

Wish list

Bush had earlier publicly promised to make the Philippines a "major non-Nato ally" of the United States, clearing the way for increased US military loans, cut-price US military equipment and other training benefits for the Armed Forces.

Bush also offered the AFP 20 UH-1H helicopters as "they become available" and said an additional 10 models would be deployed to ensure sufficient spare parts.

He agreed that the US military would perform a comprehensive review of Philippine security needs and how it could help the AFP.

Bush's package did not appear to match the wish list of military equipment that AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya had earlier laid out, which he said was needed to crush MILF rebels and Abu Sayyaf bandits.

Abaya said the Philippines needed helicopters and transport aircraft, improved communications capability and naval vessels, which would cost "hundreds of millions of dollars."

US forces participating in Balikatan 03-1 are expected to arrive as early as next month.

But there was no detail in the joint statement of the rules of engagement for the US force, nor information on how large it would be. *With reports from Reuters and AFP*

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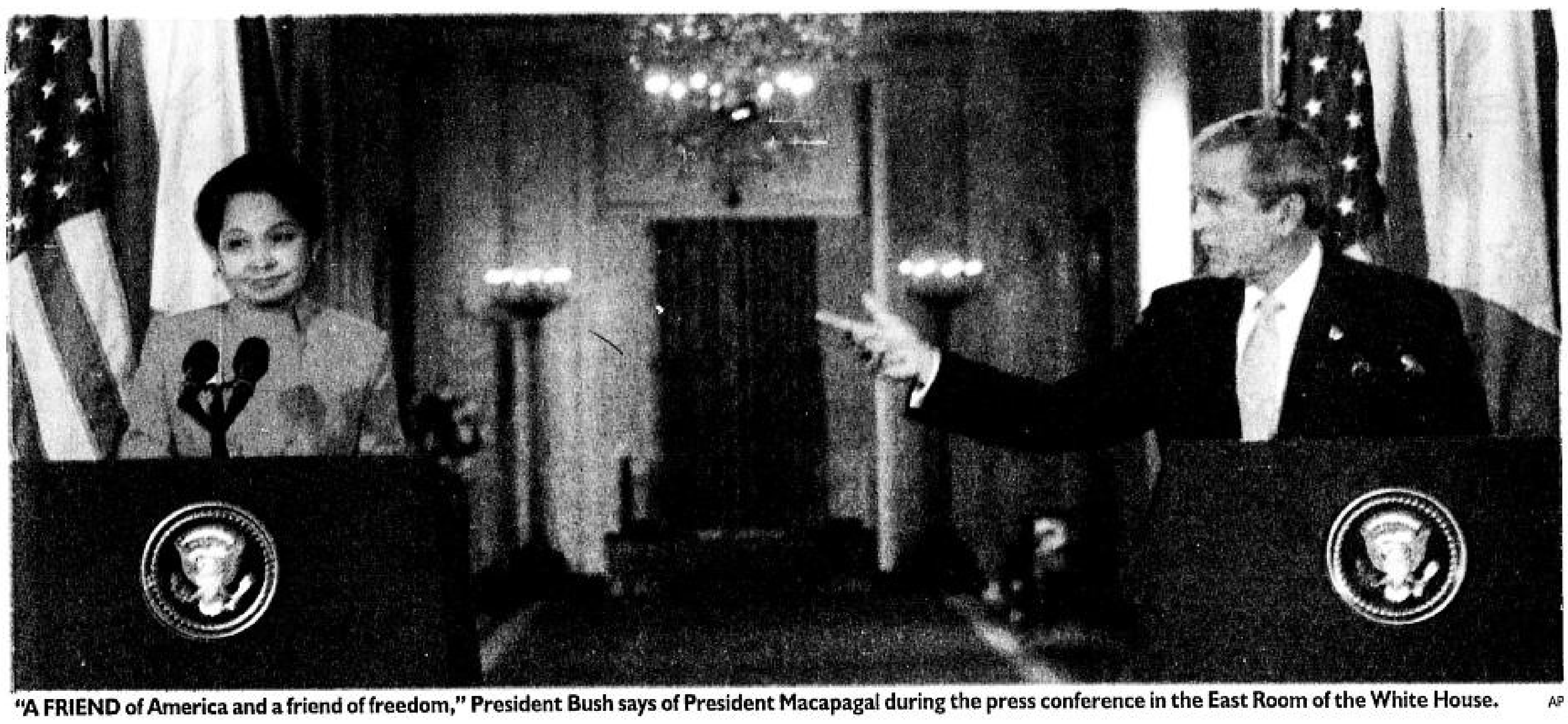

"A FRIEND of America and a friend of freedom," President Bush says of President Macapagal during the press conference in the East Room of the White House. AP

'Kodakan' galore at White House

From page A1

the US red-coat honor guard and the presidential dais as background while the rest of the Philippine and US officials in the delegation chatted with one another.

* * *

Not even the President's elder son, Pampanga Vice Gov. Mikey Arroyo, and his wife Angela could resist the momentous occasion, and they also posed for pictures of the grand scene.

Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr.'s wife Gina and Senate President Franklin Drilon's wife Mila had their pictures taken with one of the Bush administration's most famous—and powerful—women, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice.

At the state dinner, Drilon and his wife also had photos taken with US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone.

* * *

Filipino journalists likewise had a field day taking pictures of themselves at various events where they could get snapshots of Ms Macapagal and US President George W. Bush as background.

Never mind if it was a press conference in the East Room. The journalists from Manila clicked away behind the two presidents to get Bush in the same frame.

The American president was said to have been amused.

* * *

With the formal arrival honors reserved only for those invited to the state visit, the South Lawn was transformed into a dramatic piece of history.

The honor guard lined up at the end of the lawn for Ms Macapagal to pass and review. More members of the honor guard were stationed at the steps of the White House bearing US and Philippine flags and a dais with two rostrums, one for each President.

Some 400 members of the Filipino-American community, waving miniature flags, circled the lawn between the south end of the White House and the Washington Monument.

* * *

Macon Morehouse of People magazine wanted to know what to call the dress Ms Macapagal wore at the state dinner.

"It's kind of flowing and it's just so beautiful," Morehouse gushed about the President's lavender *terno* with apple green sash done by JC Buendia. (She wore no jewelry except for diamond-rimmed ruby earrings.)

Morehouse said Ms Macapagal was "very well-spoken" and came off as a strong woman.

"It's nice to have strong women presidents," she said.

* * *

US First Lady Laura Bush wore a beige Oscar de la Renta column-shaped gown—with a V-neck, long sleeves and buttons at the waist—made of gold matelasse in a floral pattern.

She had on pearl earrings mounted on finely worked flowers and leaves of Philippine-mined 18K yellow gold—a gift from Ms Macapagal. (Ms Bush is not allowed to accept gifts, but may wear them in the company of the giver, according to information from the White House.)

Both Bush and Philippine First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo wore a black tuxedo.

* * *

Ms Macapagal, according to reliable sources, prepared for her US state visit by doing aerobic exercises starting in January.

Her adviser on special projects Mai-Mai Jimenez was overheard saying the aerobics were also effective on her.

'TWAS a bright spring morning, and the sun got to US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld during arrival honors for President Macapagal at the White House South Lawn. Beside him is Foreign Secretary Blas Ople. AFP

MS MACAPAGAL meets with Secretary of State Colin Powell at the State Department after her meeting with President Bush. AP

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US names Philippines major, non-Nato ally

From page A1

is scheduled to be held in Thailand.

Thanking Ms Macapagal profusely for her strong leadership against terrorism in Southeast Asia, Bush announced that the United States would declare the Philippines a major non-Nato ally.

"This step will allow our countries to work together on military research and development and give the Philippines greater access to American defense equipment and supplies," Bush said at the joint press conference after their meeting.

Bush said the designation would elevate the Philippines to the special status with which the United States regards fellow Nato members—Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Turkey and United Kingdom.

Other countries that enjoy similar status are Australia, Bahrain, Egypt, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Argentina, South Korea and New Zealand.

Ms Macapagal welcomed the added US support and pledged to continue to fight al-Qaida and its partner organizations in her part of the world. "Terrorism knows no borders," she said at the joint news conference.

"What is important is that we work on it together and have a comprehensive approach, because terrorism will spread like a contagion, it will spread like SARS if we don't address the poverty that represents the breeding grounds for terrorism," she said, referring to the worldwide outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome.

Tremendous benefits

At her press conference, Ms Macapagal said the designation would bring tremendous benefits to the Philippines not only this year but also in the long term.

She said she had always taken note of the fact that Nato members "get the first crack at anything" from the United States.

"By making the Philippines a non-Nato ally, that helps it in its struggle" against local terror groups with links to al-Qaida and against the resurgent communist movement, White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer said.

Bush cited Ms Macapagal's staunch support for the US-led war against terrorism, recalling that she was among the very first heads of state to call him to express support after the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks. She has not wavered since, said Bush, who also noted that Ms Macapagal welcomed US troops to train and advise their Philippine counterparts.

"Madam President, for all you have done to make our world safer, America thanks you," Bush said in remarks at the state arrival ceremony at 9 a.m. Monday (10 p.m. Manila time).

Bush also announced that the United States would:

- Provide significant security assistance, training, equipment and law enforcement assistance to support the Philippines in the war on terror.
- Help Ms Macapagal carry out a comprehensive review of Philippine security needs and determine how best the United States can support, modernize and reform the Armed Forces of the Philippines. "My country welcomes President Arroyo's commitment to improve the capacity of the Philippine armed forces and we are prepared to help," Bush said.
- Help address the AFP's most pressing needs particularly in the area of mobility by providing helicopters and spare parts. Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes said the United States would provide about $126 million in additional foreign military finance and excess defense articles, including 30 Huey helicopters and a number of C-130 cargo planes.
- Hold another joint US-RP military exercises soon in which the United States will support ongoing AFP-led operations against the terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group. "The United States is committed to helping, when asked. (We) reviewed last year's highly successful deployment of US troops to the southern Philippines, and we agreed to a similar deployment in the near-term, in which US forces would support Philippine-led antiterror operations," Bush said at the joint press conference.
- Play a role in peace talks between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front as long as the group abandons the "path of violence." *(Story on Page A1)*
- Train and equip a Philippine engineering unit capable of performing civic action and humanitarian projects in conflict zones.
- Launch a project to facilitate the flow of remittances from Filipino workers around the world back to the Philippines by lowering transaction rates.
- Support legislation extending new benefits for Filipino World War II veterans (Ms Macapagal earlier announced that this would amount to $75 million).
- Continue efforts to improve medical care for Filipino veterans in the Philippines by providing medical equipment.

A VERY pleased President Macapagal after her joint press conference with President Bush who announced that the United States now regarded the Philippines as a "major non-Nato" partner. AFP

Basking in glory

Ms Macapagal basked in the attention given him by Bush. The first day of her state visit began with dramatic formal arrival honors at the South Lawn.

It was followed by a one-on-one meeting and another meeting with their respective official delegations, and a state dinner tendered for a Philippine president for only the second time in 14 years. *(Story on Page A1.)*

"This is the first state visit by a leader of an Asian country during my administration. You honor the American people with your visit, because our two nations share special ties of history and friendship and family. And we share a commitment to the defense of democracy and the advance of freedom," Bush said.

Ms Macapagal thanked Bush and First Lady Laura Bush for honoring the country and its 80 million people with a state visit.

It was Ms Macapagal who first noted that her visit showcased the restoration of cordial relations that had gone "cold and sour" when the Philippine Senate rejected in 1991 a treaty extending the presence of US military bases in the country.

"It only confirms that relations between our two countries are deeper and warmer today than they have been in a very long time," she said at the arrival ceremony.

Ms Macapagal noted that the closeness was rooted in the two countries' deep and long shared history but that it became closer because of the war on terror.

"To spare themselves, some countries might prefer an accommodation with terrorism. The Philippines has chosen to fight terrorism. We compensate for such modest means as we command with an unshakeable resolve to defeat terrorism once and for all, and with faith in the justice of our cause and our friendship with the United States," she said during the arrival ceremony.

Intangible results

Dwelling on the intangible results of her state visit, Ms Macapagal reiterated that she did not come to Washington to collect payback for her support.

"If (economic benefits will be given) then it will be appreciated. But it is not the purpose of my trip. It is not a trip of mendicancy and mercenary actions but defining a maturing and revitalizing partnership," she said at a press conference.

"Let us do away with the mindset of 'How much can we get?'" she said. Asked by a reporter about the value of the economic and military package, she said: "Again read my lips. I came here to define strategic relationship, to characterize the relationship in the years to come, pursuing mutual respect not mendicancy."

Ms Macapagal also said she would ask the International Monetary Fund to allow the Philippines to "graduate" as a borrower after 40 years of being under its supervision.

"We have become a net depositor of the IMF because our deposits with the IMF are bigger than our loans," she said.

She is scheduled today to meet with IMF officials.

The President was accompanied by First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo and their three children Luli, Juan Miguel and his wife Angela, and Dato and his wife Kakai.

Also in her delegation were Senate President Franklin Drilon and his wife Mila, Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. and his wife Gina, Secretaries Blas Ople, Roberto Romulo, Angelo Reyes, Cito Lorenzo, Jose Isidro Camacho, Vince Perez, Manuel Roxas, Marita Jimenez, Richard Gordon, Silvestre Afable, National Security Adviser Roilo Golez, Presidential Adviser Robert Romulo and Ambassador Albert del Rosario. *With a report from AP*

State dinner for President Macapagal fit for royalty

From page A1

lavender terno with apple green sash. *(See Reporter's Notebook on Page A1)*

No detail was spared for the dinner fit for royalty.

Music by the Marine Orchestra greeted Ms Macapagal and her husband and accompanied them to the grand foyer where they posed with their hosts for a photograph before they walked the red carpet to the state dining room.

The White House said Ms Bush had selected the arrangement of pink and white peonies in a crystal pedestal bowl for the dinner tables with the assistance of chief florist Nancy Clark, who has been with the White House flower shop for 20 years. There were giant columns of the same flower in the foyer.

The flowers started arriving at the White House four days before the state dinner.

Cranberry-colored damask tablecloths covered the 13 tables. The setting included Vermeil flatware, the House crystal pattern first made by the Morgantown glass guild in 1961 for then first lady Jacqueline Kennedy; gold-rimmed ivory china selected by then first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton; and crystal candlesticks with ivory-colored tapers.

Only 130 guests were invited. Of the number, 15 were from the Philippine delegation—Ms Macapagal and her husband, Senate President Franklin Drilon and wife Mila, Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. and wife Gina, Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, Secretaries Blas Ople (foreign affairs), Jose Isidro Camacho (finance), Angelo Reyes (defense) and Manuel Roxas II (trade), Ambassador to the United States Albert del Rosario and wife Margaret, senior adviser on international competitiveness Roberto Romulo, and Philippine Star publisher Maximo Soliven.

The US side included Bush administration counterparts, leading community leaders, academicians and civic leaders.

Also on the guest list were Miss America 2001 Angela Perez Baraquio, whose parents are from the Philippines; broadcast journalist Tom Brokaw; and boxer Brian Viloria.

Marriage of 2 countries

White House chef Walter Scheib and assistant Cris Comerford prepared the menu, which had as main course bellwether farm lamb, red wine reduction, achiote polenta, fresh fava beans, morels and braised cipollini onion.

Comerford, born in the Philippines and now a US citizen, said she sought common ground between the two nations as she worked. "It was like a marriage of the two countries," she told reporters before the dinner.

For instance, Maryland and the Philippines are both known for crabs, which were featured in the first course, she said.

The guests also had marine dayboat scallops, brandade of smoked trout and vine-ripened tomato gazpacho.

Mango sorbets, filled with coconut mousse, were draped with brightly colored leis made of sugar and chocolate, said pastry chef Roland Mesnier.

Mesnier, who has pleased White House guests for 23 years with his desserts, also prepared baked pineapple with sesame crumbs and assorted cookies.

Candy dishes held gold-wrapped mint chocolates that were pressed inside the White House.

The wines were a 2001 Pride Mountain Viognier and a 2000 DuMol Pinot Noir "Finn," both from California, said White House usher Daniel Shanks.

Shanks said he always went out of his way to find American wines, and did not try to keep French wines off the White House tables.

The two head tables—one for the presidents and one for their spouses—were positioned beneath a portrait of Abraham Lincoln. The settings had four glasses: two for wine, two for water.

But Bush's set had just one glass. He led the toast with water in his glass as he no longer drinks alcohol.

Mezzo-soprano Susan Graham and pianist Brian Zeger serenaded the VIP guests with 10 selections of Mozart, Ned Rorem, Aaron Copeland, George Gershwin and Ronald Bass.

Graham said she was thrilled to perform for the two presidents and their guests.

Toast to each other

Bush toasted Ms Macapagal's "unwavering" partnership in the war on terrorism, and rewarded her with a promise of a reciprocal visit. And White House officials said Bush was likely to add the Philippines to an Asia trip he had planned for October.

Ms Macapagal offered a toast to the health of her hosts and to the good relations between their two countries.

The toasts culminated Ms Macapagal's official state visit—an honor Bush had been stingy in doling out during his 28-month presidency. She was just the third foreign leader—and the first Asian leader—to be honored in such a fashion, following the leaders of Mexico and Poland.

Bush reminded the dinner guests that the Philippine President was among the first to call him after the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. And, addressing her, Bush said: "You have not wavered."

"Madam President, for your leadership and friendship, I thank you," he said, and promised a visit "later this year, with you as my host."

Bush nodded as Ms Macapagal said: "In a time of crisis, friends do not ask why, they ask how."

"We've stood side by side at every crucial point in modern history," she said.

She returned Bush's compliments by defining a man or a woman of firm resolve and goodwill—fearless leadership and iron resolve, combined with a strategic vision and an unfailing sense of justice.

"I am describing President Bush," she said.

Ms Macapagal expressed the hope that more countries would join the Philippines and the United States in the fight against international terrorism and join the "partnership of the good to complete the greater task of the coalition of the willing."

"Two are better than one, three are harder to break, four and more—nothing can prevail against them," she said.

Impressive ceremony

If the dinner had glitter, the arrival ceremony at 9 a.m. Monday (10 p.m. Manila time) was impressive.

After the honor guard took its positions at the South Lawn and on the balcony of the White House, the US first couple came out to await Ms Macapagal's arrival at the diplomatic entrance.

A black limousine arrived on the dot and Ms Macapagal, dressed in a mandarin red suit, disembarked with her husband and shook hands with their hosts.

The hosts escorted their guests to the front row of the US delegation and introduced them to Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of State Colin Powell, and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and their spouses.

The two leaders stood at attention as the ceremony began with the playing of the national anthems of the Philippines and the United States.

A 21-gun salute was fired. Bush held Ms Macapagal's arm as he led her down for the parade and review of troops.

Each delivered a speech quoting the other's words and declaring the forging of strong friendship not seen in many years since the closure of the US bases in the Philippines in 1991.

Bush was the perfect gentleman, aiding his guest whenever she had to walk up or down the platform and the grounds.

When Ms Macapagal spoke, he looked at her and listened intently, smiling quietly. *With an AP report*

Bush decision boosts RP defense, says solon

PRESIDENT George W. Bush's decision giving full US military ally status to the Philippines will boost the country's defense capabilities as it deals with increasing threats from terror and insurgent groups, analysts say.

"That will prop up the war against terror in the Philippines if we get those (military aid) packages on time," said Rep. Prospero Pichay, head of the House defense committee.

"We need it very badly. If they can deliver to us as soon as possible then that will really help deliver a big blow to the enemy," he said.

The Philippines only has 18 helicopters and two OV-10 attack planes as well as six helicopter gunships and two C-130 transport planes. "We don't have much equipment," Pichay said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo also obtained from Bush a pledge of a new joint military effort to finally crush the Abu Sayyaf, a small group of Muslim guerrillas linked to the al-Qaida terror network.

He also offered her $30 million in new aid for training and equipping the Philippine military.

As a special non-Nato ally, the Philippines would be given priority in receiving excess US military surplus, allow it to stockpile equipment and make it eligible to participate in research and development programs, the US Embassy said.

"This is a most welcome development for us, particularly the Armed Forces," Lt. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia, military vice chief of staff, said. "This would translate into added assistance in the economic and military levels."

Hours before embarking on the US trip Saturday, Ms Macapagal ordered a military offensive against the 12,500-strong Muslim separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Mindanao.

Apart from the Abu Sayyaf, the military is also struggling with the communist New People's Army (NPA), the 9,000-strong guerrilla arm of the underground Communist Party of the Philippines waging a decades-long insurgency.

Washington has labeled the Abu Sayyaf and the NPA terrorists while the MILF has been accused of having ties with the Jemaah Islamiyah, which in turn is allegedly linked to al-Qaida.

Although the two countries have long been military allies, many Filipinos feel the country was not getting enough US attention as a frontline state in the war against terror.

"People have been complaining here about the type of military packages we were getting: night vision goggles and small arms," said Joey Silva, associate director of the Asian Institute of Management policy forum, a local think tank. The visit of Ms Macapagal should change that, he said.

"It's definitely a positive note. We are now on the map as a major partner (of America) rather than before when we were just something small on the radar screen," Silva remarked. *AFP*

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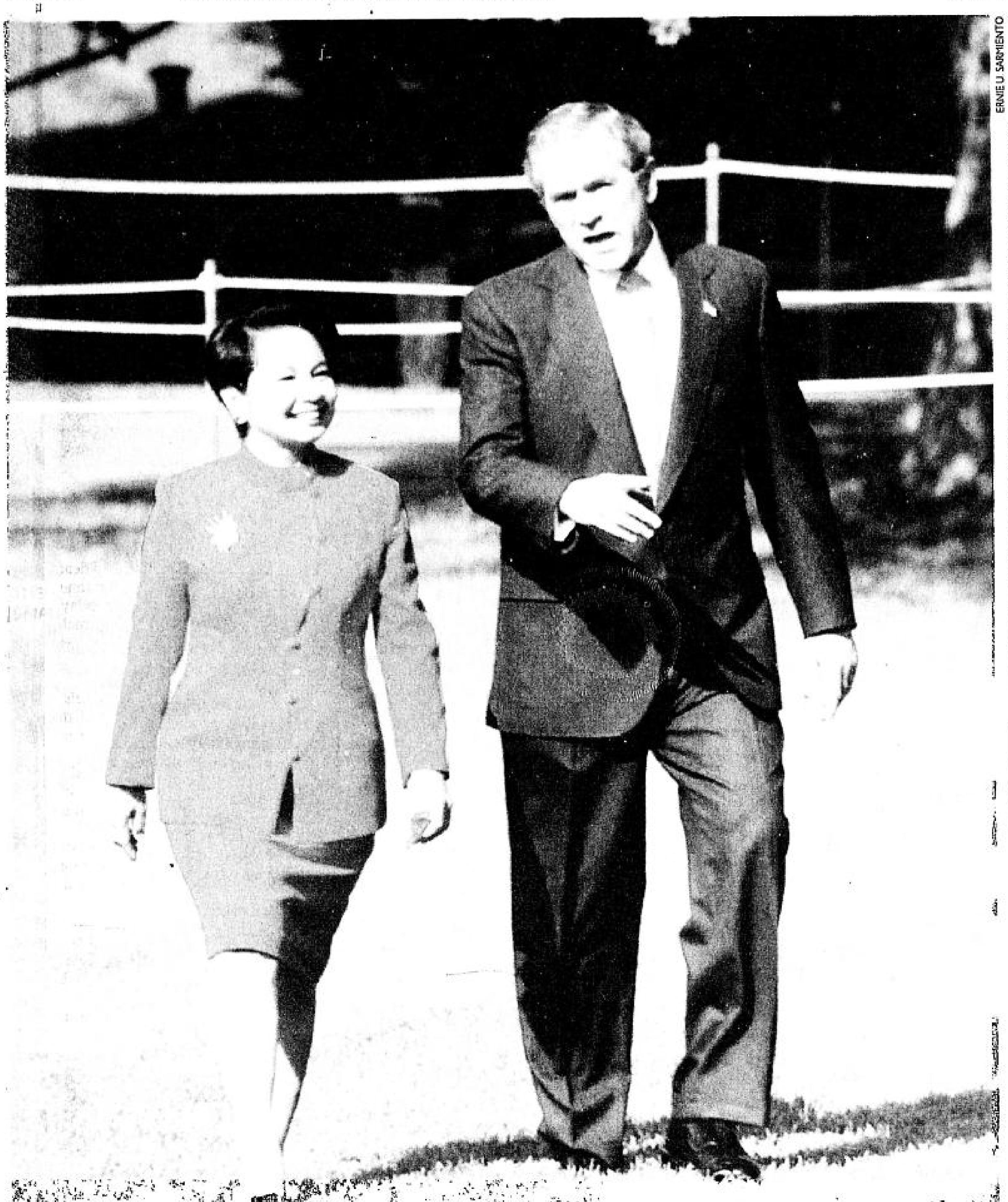


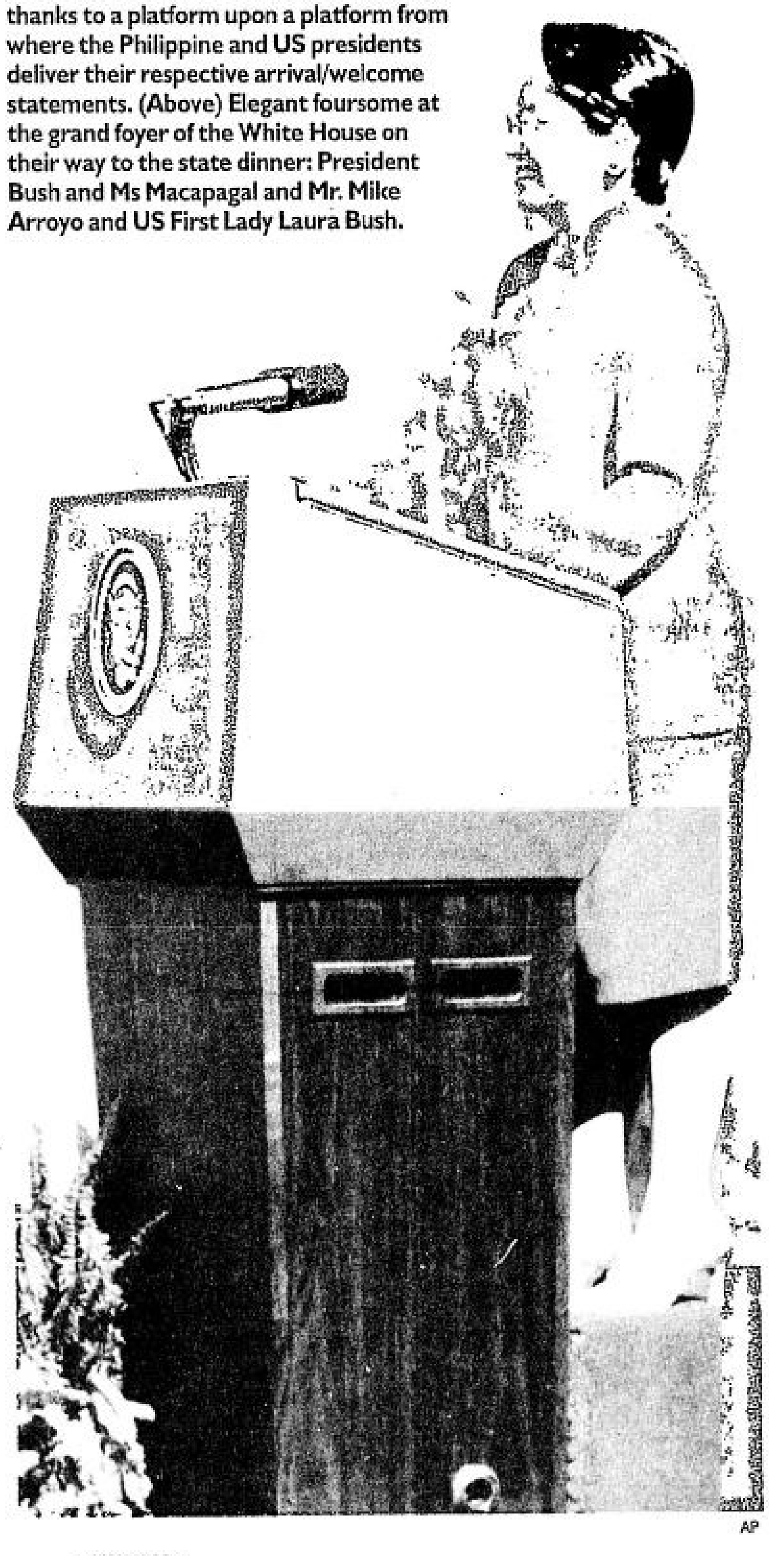
ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Standing tall (on an apple crate)

A BEAUTIFUL spring day in Washington is matched only by the welcome accorded President Macapagal by President Bush. He escorts Ms Macapagal after she trooped the line.

ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

STANDING tall in America (below), thanks to a platform upon a platform from where the Philippine and US presidents deliver their respective arrival/welcome statements. (Above) Elegant foursome at the grand foyer of the White House on their way to the state dinner: President Bush and Ms Macapagal and Mr. Mike Arroyo and US First Lady Laura Bush.



AP

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

WASHINGTON (Via PLDT)—President Macapagal-Arroyo did not need it to stand tall in America, but White House officials deemed it necessary to put a two-step apple crate on the dais where she delivered speeches together with her six-footer host.

On the platform at the South Lawn, the President had to step on the apple box placed behind her rostrum, which elevated her rather awkwardly.

The same apple crate reappeared behind her rostrum at the East Room of the White House, where she and Bush held a joint press conference after their one-on-one meeting on Monday.

If it bothered her, she did not show it.

Some members of the US media, who came in impressive numbers to cover the state visit, asked from their Filipino counterparts what the President's height was.

A reporter for the Washington Post said her editors wanted to know.

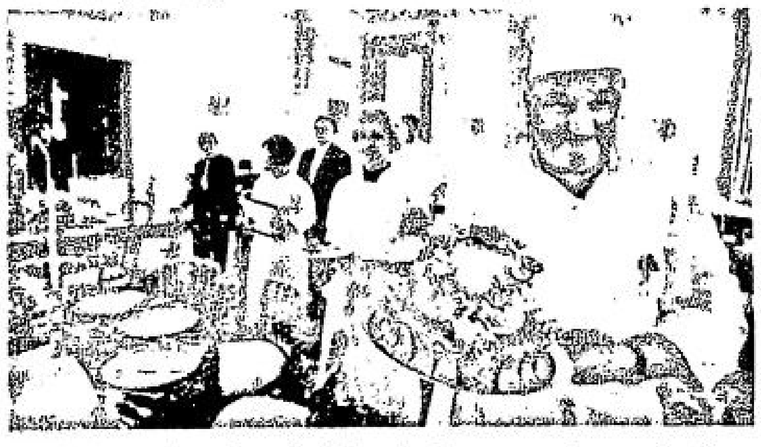
"She's very small, but that doesn't take away from her presence," the reporter said, adding that the arrival ceremony was "low-key but very beautiful."

A female American reporter was overheard saying to another: "I've never seen a woman President so small."

Said the other: "But she's also cute, and she seems nice."

ROYAL treatment comes complete with mezzo-soprano Susan Graham for entertainment, and a **VIP** guest list of **US** officialdom. AFP

THEY were there as usual, the Filipino World War II vets hoping that GMA finally would get for them what has so long been denied them. AP



EVEN dessert is a welcoming lei made of coconut and mango by the White House pastry chef Roland Mesnier. AP

PHOTO op at the Oval Office before the two leaders buckle down to serious talk about the security needs of the Philippines, how the United States could best support the AFP modernization program and other mutual concerns. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

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2 oil firms allowed to continue operating in depot

By Jerome Aning

A MANILA Regional Trial Court judge yesterday allowed Caltex Philippines Inc. and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. to continue operating at the Pandacan oil depot while the validity of an ordinance closing down the facility is being determined.

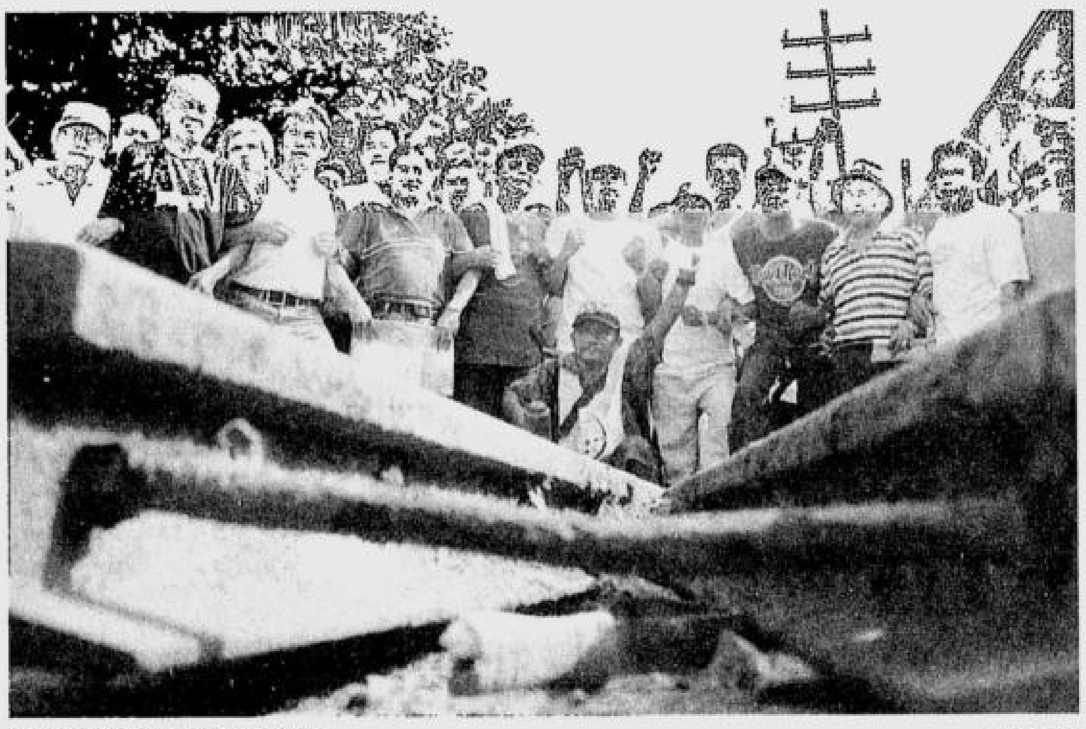
Judge Reynaldo Ros of the Manila RTC Branch 39 issued a writ of preliminary injunction ordering Mayor Lito Atienza and city government to desist from implementing the ordinance and to issue the necessary business permits to the oil firms.

The court agreed with the oil firms' contention that shutting down the depot would cause "grave and irreparable injury" not only to the companies but to the public.

In his order, Ros noted that the firms have been operating legitimately in Pandacan for many years and have made substantial investments running the depot.

Shell and Caltex's lawyers said the terminal complies with the international safety and security standards, is equipped with state-of-the-art fire fighting equipment and does not pose "any grave or extraordinary risk" to Pandacan residents.

Bb. Pilipinas bet found dead



STRIKE CRIPPLES PNR ERIK ARAZAS
Workers of the Philippine National Railways block a portion of railroad tracks in the railway firm's compound in Tayuman, Manila, as they went on strike Tuesday to demand the ouster of PNR general manager Jose Ma. Sarasola II for alleged corruption. PNR officials have denied the allegations of the striking employees.

By Marinel Cruz and Alcuin Papa

"I CAN look calm although I'm in trouble," said Binibining Pilipinas candidate no. 17 Arianne Garcia in a preliminary pageant interview last Feb. 3.

On Monday, three months after she made the statement, Garcia, 18, was found dead inside her apartment in Barangay Pinyahan in Quezon City, police said.

Garcia was said to have committed suicide, but police said no suicide note was found inside her room.

Lydia Villapando, who lived with Garcia, found the victim hanging by the neck in their apartment when she returned from school at about 4 p.m. last Monday, said P01 Joseph Dino of the Central Police District Criminal Investigation Unit.

She told police she rushed Garcia to a hospital, but the victim was declared dead on arrival.

Christopher Cahilig who wrote Garcia's profile for the Binibining Pilipinas beauty search, described her as "sweet, charming and quiet."

He wrote: "Arianne is a very smart girl. Her voice and gestures may be childlike but she exudes strength of character and sharpness of mind."

Cahilig yesterday told INQUIRER he did not pay attention to how Garcia had described herself to him during their interview.

"Little did I know that it is an omen of what she might do to herself," he said.

Cahilig said Garcia had called a friend in the United States a few hours before she was found dead.

GARCIA

"A designer friend of Arianne's told me this yesterday (Monday). I guess the girl had been really depressed," Cahilig said

Honor student

Garcia was a junior BA Tourism student at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City.

Cahilig said Garcia wanted to become a flight attendant and manage her own chain of hotels and restaurants.

She was a consistent honor student at the Quezon National High School in Lucena City where she was born.

At five-foot-nine, Garcia was one of the tallest candidates in this year's Binibining Pilipinas search, and was one of the 12 semifinalists.

Police are still investigating Garcia's death.

Drug drives net over 400 suspects

THE ANTI-DRUG drives in Navotas and Mandaluyong have led to the arrest of more than 400 suspects in the first quarter of this year.

Navotas police chief Supt. Billy Beltran said 214 drug suspects had been nabbed in the city. He added they have filed 136 cases against those arrested.

"This represents a big success on the part of the Navotas police as compared to the number of arrested personalities during the same period last year," Beltran said.

He said the positive development was the result of their intensified campaign against drugs.

Mayor Toby Tiangco has commended the local police for its effective drive against illegal drugs.

In Mandaluyong, Mayor Benjamin Abalos Jr. said the police arrested 241 drug suspects during the first quarter of the year.

Abalos said the figure represents a 96-percent increase in the number of arrests compared to the same period last year.

"At this rate, we will truly make our city drugs-free in due time," Abalos said. *Tina Santos and Nelson Flores*

Unwanted noise

ANNOYED at buses or cars whose horns are as loud as those on large ships? You can soon give your battered eardrums a rest after the Metro Manila Development Authority has announced that it would soon propose to the Metro Manila Council an ordinance prohibiting the use of "power horns" that produce ear-splitting noises.

"You don't need (those kinds of horns) in Metro Manila," MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando said.

The penalty for drivers of public utility vehicles and private vehicles caught using power horns would be the on-the-spot destruction of the horn.

He said a traffic enforcer may smash the horn to ensure that the motorist would not use it again. *Leila Salaverria*

PRRT!
BEEEP!
EEK!
HGR

MWCI cuts off water supply . . .

From page A24

cause diarrhea or other sickness.

The MWCI has formed a crisis management committee to conduct 24-hour monitoring of operations to recover Diaz's body.

The committee is composed of representatives from the DOH, Metro Manila Drinking Water Quality Standard Committee, Maynilad Water Services Inc., the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System Regulatory Office and the MWCI. *With Armand Nocum*

Quezon City now a playground for vigilantes?

By Alcuin Papa

A WRITTEN message warning drug pushers to stop their illicit trade was found with body parts of two men discovered in five places in Quezon City yesterday morning.

The warning was signed by vigilantes.

The body parts belong to two men suspected of drug dealing, police said.

Body parts were found at 4:15 a.m. yesterday in a garbage dump in Sitio San Isidro, Quezon Avenue, in Barangay Pag-asa.

Garbage collector Ricardo Amparado found the body parts wrapped in a black garbage bag inside a *balikbayan* box. A written message found with the parts said, "*Babala sa mga tulak ng mga bawal na gamot, abangan*, you're next (A warning to pushers of illegal drugs, just wait, you're next").

Body parts were next found at 5:20 a.m. yesterday in front of the Carmelite Missionary House on 19 Sct. Madrinan, Barangay South Triangle.

At 6 a.m. yesterday, a torso was found in front of 36 St. Mary St., Barangay Rodriguez, in Cubao, by Aida Era.

About 15 minutes later, scavengers found body parts inside a carton box at the Payatas dump.

The last pieces of this human jigsaw puzzle were found at 8:45 a.m. by the Talayan creek.

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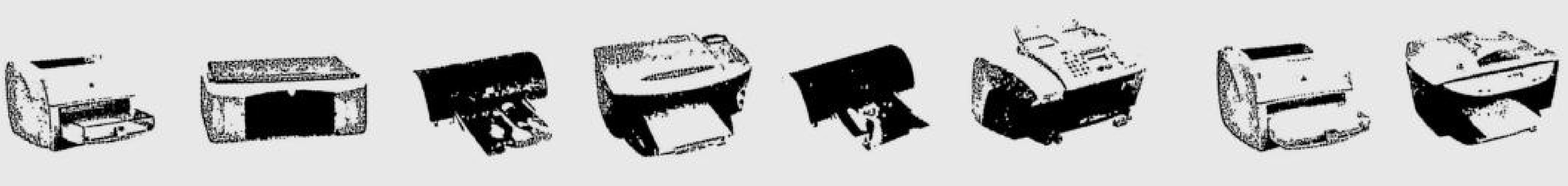

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METRO

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Editor **Abelardo S. Ulanday**

Girl, 3, 'ironed' by mom

THE MOTHER of a 3-year-old girl was thrown in jail after she beat up and burned her daughter with a flat iron on Monday night in Navotas.

Police identified the mother as Rebecca Casoy, 38. Her daughter suffered severe burns in the hands and is still in critical condition at an undisclosed hospital.

SP01 Eleonor Eleazar of the Navotas Police Women's and Children's Desk, said the mother apparently got angry when the girl failed to heed her call to go home from playing outside.

Casoy, who was then pressing clothes, went out, dragged the girl inside their house, and started hitting her. Casoy also picked up the flat iron and repeatedly burned the girl with it, SP02 Eleazar said.

The girl's loud cries caught the attention of their neighbors and barangay officials who rushed the girl to a hospital and brought Casoy to police. She is now facing charges of child abuse. *Tina Santos*

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MWCI cuts off water supply in 6 key areas

By Agnes Donato

LEFT with no choice but to shut down its main water pipeline, the Manila Water Company Inc. yesterday said that several portions of Quezon City, San Juan, Mandaluyong, Pasig, Makati and Manila will be waterless for several days.

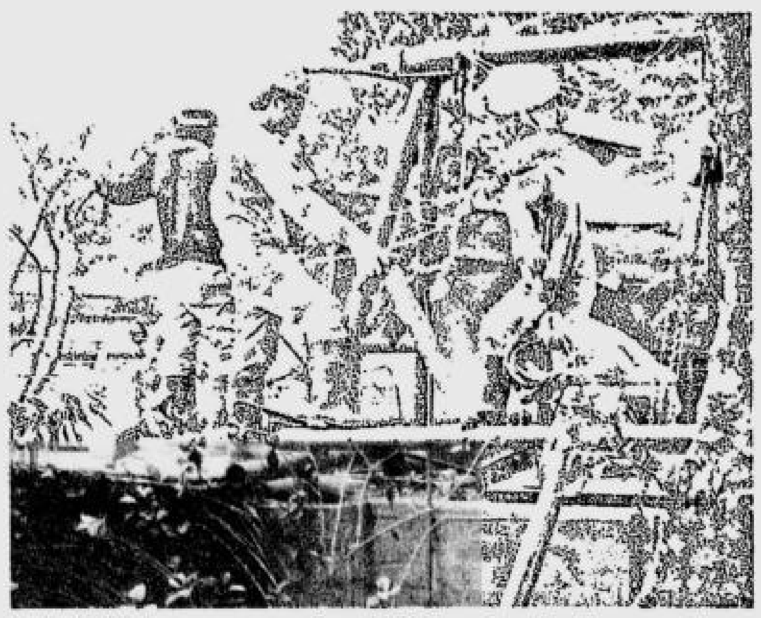
Other areas in these cities will also experience low water pressure, according to MWCI Corporate Communications Director Joel Lacsamana.

MWCI has yet to find the body of Randy Diaz, 19, who fell into a ventilation chamber of the water company and was swept by strong current of water in an aqueduct last Saturday.

But Lacsamana has assured affected customers that the MWCI would supply water in their areas or install static tanks there.

In a press briefing yesterday, Lacsamana said the water company had commissioned divers or frogmen from the Coast Guard to retrieve Diaz's body.

He asked the media to stay away from the area where the divers were working "in order not to disrupt the operation," which he described as delicate.



MEMBERS of a rescue team from MWCI conduct flushing operations at the firm's ventilation chamber in Quezon City. JOAN BONDOC

"We are protecting here our consumers and crew, as well as the frogmen. This is a delicate operation, so please bear with us," Lacsamana pleaded.

He said the search and recovery operation was expected to last a few days.

Manila Water and the Coast Guard will not stop until the body of Diaz is recovered, Lacsamana said.

"We cannot rush operations like this, but we assure the public that we will go back to normal operation as soon as Mr. Diaz's body is retrieved," he said.

The water concessionaire had already incurred heavy losses from its operations for the past few years, but Lacsamana said its primary concern now was to locate Diaz's body and appease consumers who fear that water supply from MWCI could be contaminated.

Lacsamana stressed that the 1,525-mm pipeline where Diaz's body could be stuck has already been isolated from the rest of the water supply system.

He said this should allay fears of consumers that water supply is being contaminated.

The Department of Health yesterday also assured consumers that there was not much danger that a dead body could contaminate MWCI's water supply.

Dr. Maria Consorcia Quezon of the DOH yesterday said that the human body is organic, not toxic.

The sheer volume of water passing through MWCI's water pipes will also lessen the dangers of contamination of the water supply, she said.

But Dr. Quezon admitted she could not make "any definite conclusion right now" until the body is removed from the water system.

She said, however, that they would be testing the water for the presence of bacteria that might

MWCI/ A23

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02/03

Edsa's heavy traffic flow baffles MMDA

By Leila Salaverria

TRAFFIC flow along Edsa has been unusually heavy the past two weeks, and even the Metro Manila Development Authority does not know why.

MMDA Traffic Operations Center Director Angelito Vergel de Dios yesterday said MMDA personnel are trying to determine what has caused the traffic on Edsa to slow down not just during peak hours, but also throughout the day.

He said the Guadalupe to Megamall stretch was the most congested part of Edsa.

Traffic slowed to a crawl along Shaw Boulevard after one lane was closed for repairs on a leaking water pipe.

But this only explains the traffic congestion on Shaw, the traffic director said.

"Other than that, we're trying to think (what could have caused the traffic congestion). It's not normal. It's vacation time and yet there are traffic jams," Vergel de Dios said.

He added that the MMDA had even closed the entry and exit points in Megamall near the Asian Development Bank in an effort to reduce congestion on that part of Edsa. Traffic will be rerouted to Julia Vargas road.

The traffic director said the unusually heavy traffic was what prompted motorists to suggest that the MMDA revoke exemption of vehicles going through Edsa from the number coding scheme from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Vergel de Dios also said yesterday that MMDA personnel are looking at the possibility that the presence of provincial buses along Edsa is the reason for the monstrous traffic jams.

"They're not allowed on Edsa. If you just remove these provincial buses, then maybe we can see relief from the traffic congestion," he said.

In April, the Department of Transportation and Communication launched a crackdown on colorum buses plying the roads of Metro Manila. Colorum buses had been blamed for clogging the roads, especially Edsa.

Ex-Armed Forces chief is new prisons director

SANTIAGO

HE USED to supply dried fish to the New Bilibid Prisons (NBP) in Muntinlupa several decades ago.

But on June 2, former Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Dionisio Santiago will assume the post of Bureau of Prisons director, replacing Ricardo Macala, who had been sacked for alleged nepotism at the NBP.

The bemedalled general said he was told of his appointment by President Macapagal-Arroyo in a phone call about two weeks ago.

The specific instruction was for him to go after prison officials and rich inmates suspected of being behind the proliferation of illegal substances at the NBP, he said.

"There's a tough job ahead," he told the INQUIRER, "but I'll do everything to make substantial changes."

With hardly any background on penal affairs and management, Santiago will be faced with the dirty job of stamping out corruption and drug smuggling in the country's penal colonies, particularly the New Bilibid Prisons.

Besides drug trafficking, Santiago will also look into reports that some prison officials were padding the price of food allocated for inmates, he said.

Complaints about "ghost employees" hired by previous prisons officials will also be a priority in his clean-up list, Santiago said.

"These things are not new," he said. "But with firm resolve, I know we can root them out and regain the dignity of our prisons."

Santiago accepted the post of prisons director, widely considered disproportionate to his stature, at a time when he should be enjoying his retirement.

But he said he sees the new assignment as an opportunity to help people. "The post may seem small for someone who had headed the AFP but it would in fact give me a great opportunity to help a lot of people."

Christian Esguerra

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PSC undecided on Palaro

By Marc Anthony Reyes

ORGANIZERS led by the provincial government of Lanao del Norte yesterday said they leave the decision on the staging of the Palarong Pambansa to the Philippine Sports Commission.

For its part, the Department of Education said the fate of the national games is now in the hands of the PSC.

However, PSC chair Eric Buhain yesterday maintained it's still status quo with regard to Palaro as the agency waits for the Armed Forces and the Philippine National Police to declare Lanao del Norte safe for the expected 5,000 students/athletes.

"We are all waiting for the situation to improve although normalcy has been restored in most part of the province," said Buhain of the Games which has been twice shelved due to peace and security concerns.

Buhain added that the decision to transfer or scrap the Palaro altogether will be made not only by the PSC but by all stakeholders of the Games, including the DepEd and the provincial government of Lanao del Norte.

However, several sectors said the PSC must initiate the move to decide on the Palaro considering that it is the primary agency in charge of the annual grassroots development program.

President Arroyo, who is still in the United States, earlier stood firm on her decision to hold the Palaro in the capital town of Tubod, but stressed that the date would depend on the peace and order situation in Lanao del Norte.

Education Edilberto de Jesus, saying the PSC will be the key in the staging of the Games, said his regional directors who traditionally run the preparation of the student/athletes in the Games will just abide by the instructions of the PSC through Buhain.

"It is their (PSC's) call, we are open to all adjustments to be made," said De Jesus, referring to the expected technicalities if the Palaro is held right after the opening of classes.

De Jesus said there will be problems concerning the athlete/students who will, by then, graduate from elementary or high school.

Buhain earlier said he has an understanding with De Jesus to waive the eligibility of the affected athletes.

Although there had been expectations the Palaro would finally push through after the school opening, apprehensions persisted after the military rained bombs on rebel lairs in Lanao and other parts of Mindanao.

Youth volunteers, Christians and Muslims alike, who pledged their services for the week-long event, have already been tapped to offer prayers and petition for peace in the region.

Lanao del Norte officials, led by Imelda Quibranza-Dimaporo, said they were keeping their fingers crossed that the situation would improve soon.

Sources in the province said that, although things have been normal in Tubod, site of the Games, and its nearby towns during the past three weeks, there were still skirmishes in the mountains.

The situation could however deteriorate following the bombing by the military of several MILF lairs, which had forced the evacuation of at least 30,000 civilians in Lanao alone.

RP boxing team off to good start

By Roy Luarca

SEVILLE, Spain—Esmael Bacongon ran out of gas but relied on his fighting heart to beat local bet Jose Lorenzo Monday night and give RP Revicon a bright start in the BoxAm tournament at the Poli Deportivo El Paraguas here.

The 24-year-old Bacongon prevailed, 24-20, to move within a win of a medal in the six-day, 11-nation tournament.

The 5-foot-8 Bacongon forced a mandatory 8-count with a jarring right straight to the jaw near the end of the second round.

As Bacongon's strength began to fade in the third, the Spaniard rallied and also scored a standing count in the fourth.

It wasn't enough to overhaul Bacon-

RP/ A28

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SEAG TARGET

4th says Dayrit, 3rd claims Buhain

THE PHILIPPINE Sports Commission and the Philippine Olympic Committee yesterday came up with contrasting predictions on the expected RP finish in the Vietnam Southeast Asian Games.

PSC chair Eric Buhain made an emphatic declaration that the national athletes can pull off at least a third place.

He was reacting to the statement made by Philippine Olympic Committee president Celso Dayrit during yesterday's PSA Forum that the country might place fourth at best in the biennial meet.

"As far as I'm concerned, I have complete trust in our athletes and I think they can duplicate if not surpass our earlier prediction that we will land at least third in the overall standings," Buhain told the INQUIRER.

He said the national athletes need all the support they can get these days as they train for the Games slated in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh in December.

"What's the use of sending delegations there if we don't trust them to give their best," said Buhain. "That's why we have criteria to follow, because we want to at least have a basis for our projection."

Buhain said President Arroyo has instructed him to give his full support for the athletes who are counted upon to improve the country's 31-gold medals during the Kuala Lumpur SEA Games two years ago.

4TH SAYS /A26

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Nets want better break in Game 2

AUBURN HILLS, Michigan--The New Jersey Nets had never won a game with so few points, a record they don't want to break again anytime soon.

So the Nets spent Monday trying to get their spotty fast break back in full gear for Game 2 of their Eastern Conference finals series against the Detroit Pistons on Tuesday (Wednesday in Manila).

"It would be nice to take the fast break from the first quarter and fourth quarter — and see if we can duplicate that," coach Byron Scott said.

Asked for more reflections on Sunday's 76-74 Game 1 victory, Scott and his players did the only thing they could do: brag about their defense.

"We've always thought our defense was underrated," Scott said. "I don't think you can get to the Eastern Conference finals two straight years without being able to play defense.

"So I think our guys had a little bit of a chip on their shoulders. They wanted to show we were a good defensive team also."

The Nets have the No. 2 scoring defense in the league, behind Detroit. But while winning ugly is OK, Sunday was too unsightly for comfort for a team that has averaged 91.1 points in the playoffs.

"We played pretty good early; we played decent late," said Kenyon Martin, whose 8-for-14 game made him the only player to make more than half his shots. "So those middle quarters, we've got to take care of."

For the Pistons, Game 1 wasn't quite ugly enough. The team so used to winning low-scoring nail-biters — they are 10-0 in overtime — watched the other team pull one out when Jason Kidd hit a fadeaway 20-footer over a double team with 1.4 seconds left.

That was mixed news for the Pistons. They more or less got the style of game they wanted. Still, even a defense as good as theirs can't make up for an offense that scores just two field goals in the fourth quarter. *AP*

Solar Sports will telecast Game Two of the New Jersey Nets-Detroit Pistons NBA Eastern Conference Finals live at 8 a.m. today (Wednesday, May 21), with a replay at 8 p.m.

AT A GLANCE

NBA PLAYOFFS 2003

CONFERENCE FINALS

Eastern Conference

(1) Detroit vs. (2) New Jersey
Pistons 0, Nets 1
Game 1: New Jersey 76, Detroit 74
Game 2 at Detroit (May 21, 8 a.m.)
Game 3 at New Jersey (May 23, 8:30 a.m.)
Game 4 at New Jersey (May 25, TBD)
*Game 5 at Detroit (May 27, 8 a.m.)
*Game 6 at New Jersey (May 29, 8 a.m.)
*Game 7 at Detroit (May 31, 8 a.m.)

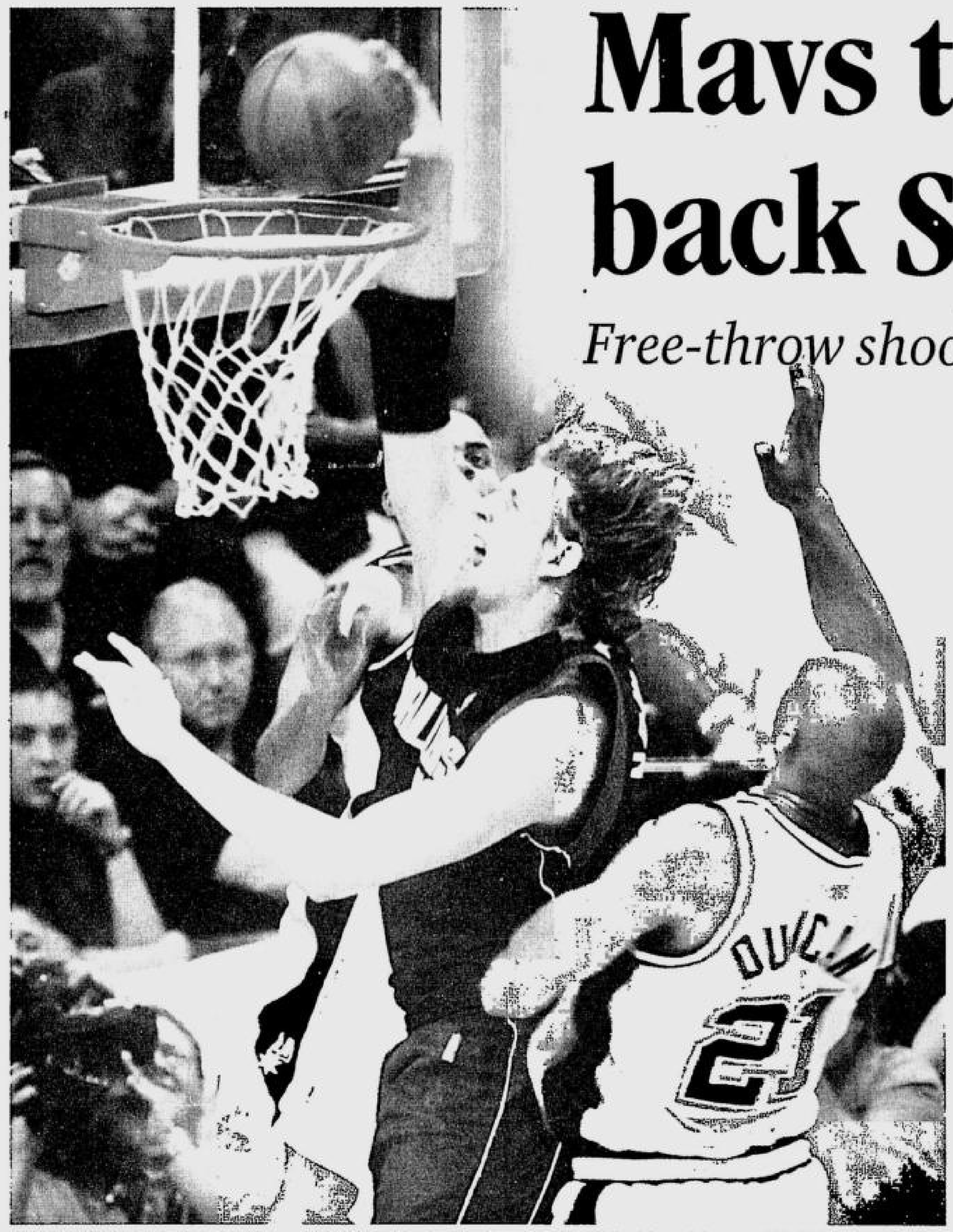
Western Conference

(1) San Antonio vs (3) Dallas
Spurs 0, Mavericks 1
Game 1: Dallas 113, San Antonio 110
Game 2 at San Antonio (May 22, 8 a.m.)
Game 3 at Dallas (May 24, 9:30 a.m.)
Game 4 at Dallas (May 26, 8:30 a.m.)
*Game 5 at San Antonio (May 28, 9:30 a.m.)
*Game 6 at Dallas (May 30,9:30 a.m.)
*Game 7 at San Antonio (June 1,8:30 a.m.)

* If necessary
TBD (To Be Determined)

Mavs turn back Spurs

Free-throw shooting keys win



NOWITZKI (left) dunks over Duncan (right) and Parker in the second half. The Mavericks won, 113-110, to lead the West Conference Finals best-of-seven series 1-0. AFP

SAN ANTONIO--The Dallas Mavericks missed their first free throw and made their final 49 in succession Monday to pull off a stunning comeback and beat the San Antonio Spurs 113-110 in Game 1 of the Western Conference finals.

The Mavericks closed the game with a 24-9 run, thanks to some defensive moves by Don Nelson, after falling behind by as many as 18 points and trailing nearly the entire game.

Dirk Nowitzki led Dallas with 38 points, going 17-for-17 from the line, and Michael Finley was 10-for-10 at the stripe while scoring 26. Nick Van Exel was 7-for-7 at the line for 14 points, and Steve Nash was 6-for-6 and scored 22.

NBA playoff history includes 10 games in which a team made all of its free throws, with the best of the bunch a 28-for-28 performance by Phoenix in 1989.

That makes what Dallas did even more impressive, given that they were 0-for-1 from the line after Eduardo Najera missed the first one with 2:25 left in the first quarter.

That was the same first quarter in which this game looked totally different from the way it ended. San Antonio's Tim Duncan was nearly unstoppable, Dallas was frustrated, and it looked as though the Spurs might turn it into a runaway.

The three-hour, one-minute game sure didn't turn out that way.

After Dallas fell behind 101-87 with 8 1/2 minutes left, the Mavs made their comeback. Finley ended it by driving around his defender and scoring on a floater over Duncan for a 111-110 lead with 14 seconds left.

Duncan shot an airball from in close while being double-teamed, and Nowitzki made two free throws with 4 seconds left for a three-point lead.

The Mavericks wouldn't allow the Spurs to attempt a tying 3-pointer, choosing instead to foul Duncan immediately after he caught the inbounds pass.

Duncan missed both free throws — a fitting ending on a night when he missed seven of 19 foul shots and the Spurs missed 17 of 48.

Duncan finished 40 points and 15 rebounds, while Tony Parker had 18 points.

Successful ankle surgery for Miller

INDIANAPOLIS--Indiana Pacers guard Reggie Miller underwent successful arthroscopic surgery on his right ankle Monday.

The surgery, performed by the Pacers' team doctor Sandy Kunkel, cleaned out loose cartilage and bone spurs from the ankle.

Miller, 37, will begin rehabilitation immediately and is expected to make a full recovery. He's coming off the worst playoff series of his career, averaging 9.2 points on 28 percent shooting in a six-game loss to Boston.

Miller, a free agent, originally sustained a deep bone bruise to his right ankle during an exhibition game before the World Championships in August. The injury bothered him all season. *AP*

Who'll win Cojuangco Cup?

THIS Sunday, May 25, horseracing takes the spotlight at the Santa Ana Park with the staging of the keenly awaited Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. Cup, first leg of the 2003 Triple Crown Stakes Series. A fat paycheck of P1 million will be awarded to the winner of this blue-ribbon affair highlighting the Philracom Summer Racefest hosted by chair Jaime Dilag.

Danding Cojuangco, founding chair of the Philippine Racing Commission, has been invited to the event which is being held in his honor.

The Cojuangco Cup will feature six tough and tested 3-year-olds in the 1,600-meter championships race, but all eyes will be focused on perennial rivals High Octane and Security Master, the most dominant horses in recent juvenile division races. The others in the star-studded cast are Success Story, Favorite Girl, War Hero and West Bound.

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

While I am not a racing expert, still I am rooting for High Octane, the most promising galloper and heir apparent to the legendary Wind Blown from the star-studded stable of Hermie Esguerra. High Octane, the bay colt by Hazm (USA) out of Rosegarden (USA), is in a class of his own more so after winning in grand fashion on April 13 the second leg of the "Road to the Triple Crown" series. The opening leg was won by Security Master, the celebrated progeny of Khozaam (USA) out of Milrose (NZ).

In that "Road" race, High Octane, ridden flawlessly by jockey Dominador Borbe Jr., made mincemeat of the opposition, holding off Success Story, Diktador and Red Star Rising in the early going and outlasting West Bound in the final drive for home to win by half a length.

As noted breeder and TV executive Jake Maderazo said.: "There's no doubt that High Octane will be a top Triple Crown candidate. Napakaganda ng laki. He's such a thrill to watch."

High Octane, the 2002 champion 2-year-old colt, also marked his checkered career last season by topping the Juvenile Colts Classic of the 7th San Miguel Beer-Marho Breeders' Cup held under the auspices of the Metropolitan Association of Race Horse Owners headed by noted sports patron Aristeo "Putch" Puyat.

Playing the supporting role to this Sunday's Cojuangco Cup is the P500,000 Hopeful Stakes Race, involving nine horses in the 1,600-meter distance. These are Down Jones, Reigns Supreme, Gallil, Major Leaguer, Nor, Reporter, Speed Machine, Tatler Cover and Uprising.

Viva subdues Blu, snatches last semifinal ticket

GAMES TOMORROW *(Pasay Sports Complex)*
2 p.m.—John O. vs Viva Mineral Water
4 p.m.— Hapee vs Montaña Jewels

By Dennis U. Eroa

COACH Koy Banal and his band of gritty Viva Mineral Water players certainly deserved a high mark for trying.

After getting frustrated thrice in its bid to enter the four-team semifinals, Viva finally took the fourth and final semis ticket as it downed Blu Star Detergent, 71-56, yesterday in their knockout match in the Sunkist-PBL Unity Cup at the Pasig Sports Center.

Things looked dim for the league's newcomer as Viva, one win away from the semis, lost to early qualifiers Hapee and Montaña during the eliminations. The Water Force dropped to the relegation phase where they bounced back by ruling Pool A and getting twice-to-beat edge over Pool B topnotcher Blu.

Blu, however, forced the do-or-die match with a 77-71 victory last Saturday at the same venue.

But Blu wasn't ready for Viva's swirling comeback. Hardly pressured, Viva shackled Blu top guns Eric dela Cuesta, Rey Mendez and Lou Gatumbato all throughout the one-sided match.

Unmerciful, Banal's charges did not allow the Detergent Kings a good look at the basket as Blu missed its first 13 shots from the field in the fourth period.

Scores:

VIVA 71—Miranda 23, Co 14, Misolas 11, Jones 10, Ybañez 8, Isip 3, Razon 2, Napa 0, sinco 0, Margate 0.

BLU STAR 56—Hernandez 8, Lopez8, Dela Cuesta 8, Gatumbato 8, Mendez 7, Taguines 6, Pascual 6, Prior 3, Garcia 2, Gamboa 0.

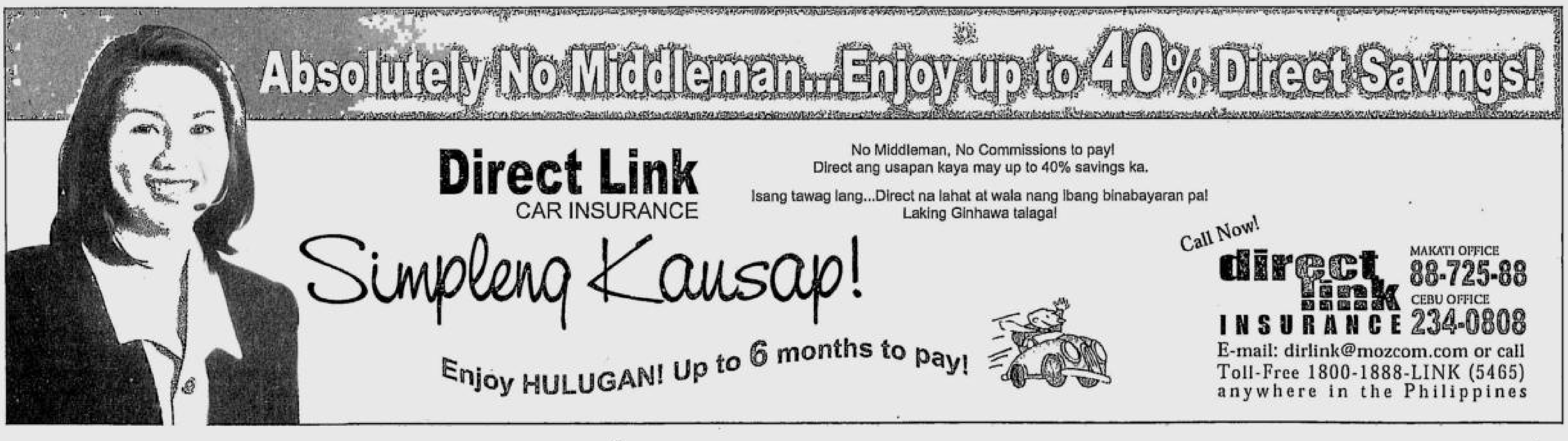
Quarters:18-9, 42-27, 52-44, 71-56

4th says Dayrit, 3rd claims Buhain

From page A25

The PSC chief earlier declared he will approve all qualified athletes to the Vietnam SEAG even if the number reaches 500, which was earlier projected by the POC.

There are already 300 athletes who have passed the criteria, according to Dayrit, citing the requirement of at least silver medal in the past SEAG and the bronze in the past Asian Games. *Dennis Eroa, Marc Anthony Reyes*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Show is over; it's gametime

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

YES Pedro, there's life in the NBA after the Los Angeles Lakers.

Sorry, it's not the kind of sensational, screaming, star-studded joy ride you've been used to.

It's not the kind of basketball show you've savored all these past noisy years.

It may not sound, taste like a life at all.

It promises to be dull, cold, flat, colorless.

That's if you continue to long for the circus act first made modernly famous by Michael Jordan.

OK, with Air Jordan stuck on the ground, Kobe Bryant was next picked to continuously fuel on-game hysteria with his acrobatics.

***

Sorry, with Kobe & Co. outshamed and sulking, there's no promise of a new kid on the block.

You see, the current NBA conference championships could indeed loom like an entirely new merchandise.

It could be tepid tea, a far cry from the sensational, boiling, aromatic morning coffee of past NBA campaigns.

Because you've shaped your basketball beliefs, fundamentals based on the successful ego trips of past heroes, the new NBA show could read as drably strange as a foreign newspaper early in the morning.

Totally different, indeed.

***

Imagine a big game being decided on free throws, like that big one pulled off by Dallas over San Antonio yesterday.

And what of that win by New Jersey over tough, terrific Detroit the other day, a game that ground and groaned methodically like a football match with its great defensive stops?

Sorry, but this is not basketball the way you've dreamed and lived the game.

It could indeed feel like walking home alone on a starless night.

Because, the sad truth is there are no truly great, great stars, sparkling and sensational as Kobe and Air Jordan, in the current cast.

William Rhoden of the New York Times hit it right. We are on the brink of a new era in the NBA.

From a star system, the NBA could now be dribbling its way to a sounder, if less sensational, basketball system with emphasis on team play.

***

So far, there has been less emphasis on ego-boosting sparklers.

Detroit, for one, can't lay claim to a single superstar. And Joe Dumars, head of team operations, explained it succinctly when he said they "don't have the big names and the top billings, but guys who have come through in the clutch time and again."

It's of course a pity that, after the Lakers fell in fragments with that final homecourt loss to San Antonio, the local basketball backyard was suddenly shrouded in gloom.

There were instant cries about the NBA season expiring well ahead of schedule following the sorry, humiliating exit of the Lakers.

There are fans, like my godson Ronald Layug of San Fernando, Pampanga, who said they would continue to watch the NBA games only to pray that San Antonio pay for what it had done to the Lakers, whom they had adored like mythical gods.

It's all wrong, they would cry, the NBA season suddenly feels coldly strange. This is not the kind of basktball they've been taught to admire.

Sit there and relax, please. But don't just look.

The key here is to watch closely and see what's going on out there.

This finally is the season of purity in the NBA, when the team, not the superstar, will prevail.

The show is over.

It's gametime, folks.

SPORTS TV

Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

BASKETBALL: Nets vs Pistons, Game 2; 8 a.m. (r - 8 p.m.); Solar Sports - New Jersey got the upper hand in the series, thanks to Jason Kidd's heroics in Game 1, but the Pistons will try to bounce back and even the score.

TENNIS: Hamburg Masters Highlights; 8 p.m. (r); Star Sports - Don't cry for Argentina as two of their countrymen clashed for the title in this clay court event.

BILLIARDS: Rack 'Em Up 2; 8 a.m., 1 p.m. and 7 p.m.; ESPN - Django Bustamante is the featured pool master as he competes against Alex Lely and Niels Feijen in separate matches.

SOCCER: UEFA Cup Final 2003 - Celtic vs Porto; tomorrow at 2:30 a.m.; ESPN - Scottish squad Celtic vie for the UEFA Cup title against Portuguese power Porto.

BOWLING: Aviva Asian Bowling Tour; 9 a.m.; ESPN - Quarterfinal action goes underway in Thailand as Asia's top bowlers battle vie for honor, glory and as well as some dough.

BADMINTON: Sudirman Cup; 4 p.m.; ESPN - It's China taking on Korea in this badminton showcase held in the Netherlands.

GOLF: The Golf Club 2003; 5:30 p.m. (r); Star Sports - Learn more about the gentleman's game in this informative program.

Pals seek berth in Asian Invitationals

GAMES TODAY (*Philsports Arena*)
5 p.m.—Red Bull vs Shell
7:30 p.m.—Talk N' Text vs Purefoods

By June Navarro

TALK N' Text seeks to become the fourth team to gain an outright entry into the Asian Invitationals when it meets the Purefoods TJ Hotdogs today in the Samsung-PBA All Filipino Cup at the Philsports Arena.

Shell, on the other hand, is hoping to tame the Batang Red Bull Thunder in a drastic bid to steal the last ticket in the quarterfinals from the Barangay Ginebra Kings.

Envious of San Miguel Beer, FedEx and the Thunder for making the Asian Invitationals next conference, the Phone Pals will try to blast out of a two-game rut in the 5 p.m. set to win a game that pits Asi Taulava against Red Bull's Davonn Harp.

The Phone Pals suffered a twin setback to the Kings and the Express after a five-game roll that somehow put them at a precarious state in the race for the invitationals at the 9-6.

It just so happened that FedEx won over Sta. Lucia Realty on Sunday that enabled the Express and the Beermen to earn automatic berths in the invitationals and make things a bit easy for the Phone Pals.

After the Express thumped the Realtors on a running jumper by Wynne Arboleda in the dying seconds, 76-75, the Phone Pals, along with the Coca-Cola Tigers, will only need a lone victory to advance into the next conference.

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GIRDING FOR COLONIAL

Sorenstam takes place among men

FORT WORTH, Texas—Annika Sorenstam arrived on the PGA Tour through the back gate.

With nearly 80 reporters and photographers camped out in front of the Colonial clubhouse, inspecting each courtesy car to see if she was inside, Sorenstam sneaked into the driving range and took her place among the men.

Actually, only Cliff Kresge was on the practice range as the blistering sun started to duck behind cloud cover late in the afternoon.

Still, it was no ordinary Monday on the PGA Tour.

Sorenstam will be the first woman in 58 years to compete on the PGA Tour, and the Colonial has marked the occasion by selling "Go Annika" buttons in the pro shop, along with a commemorative tin of her Callaway golf balls–each with her signature number (59) and a stamp of her autograph.

Despite a relatively calm day along the banks of the Trinity River, anticipation was growing about how this week would unfold. How will she play? What will she shoot? How will she handle the crush of media?

The tournament has issued 583 media credentials. Not only is that up–way up–from 178 last year, it computes to nearly five media for every player in the field.

Sorenstam got a taste of that early. After hitting balls for about 30 minutes, she got into a cart and was surrounded by 20 media–so thick the cart had nowhere to go.

The 32-year-old Swede got presidential treatment, with reporters shouting questions that received one-word answers.

How will you handle the media attention?

Sorenstam smiled and replied, "I don't know."

Everything remains a mystery.

After three months of hype, debate and controversy, Sorenstam finally gets to test her game against the best in golf after accepting a sponsor's exemption to the Colonial. *AP*

SORENSTAM putts on the practice green before the Bank of America Colonial golf tournament at the Colonial Country Club in Fort Worth Texas yesterday. When the Swedish superstar tees it up on May 22, she'll become the first woman since Babe Didrikson Zaharias (inset) in 1945 to play in a PGA Tour event. AFP

RP Seniors Open today

THE PHILIPPINE Seniors Amateur Open blasts off today with 82 players competing at the Palmer Course of The Orchard Golf and Country Club in Dasmariñas, Cavite.

Tee-off time, according to the organizing National Golf Association of the Philippines, will be at 6:30 a.m.

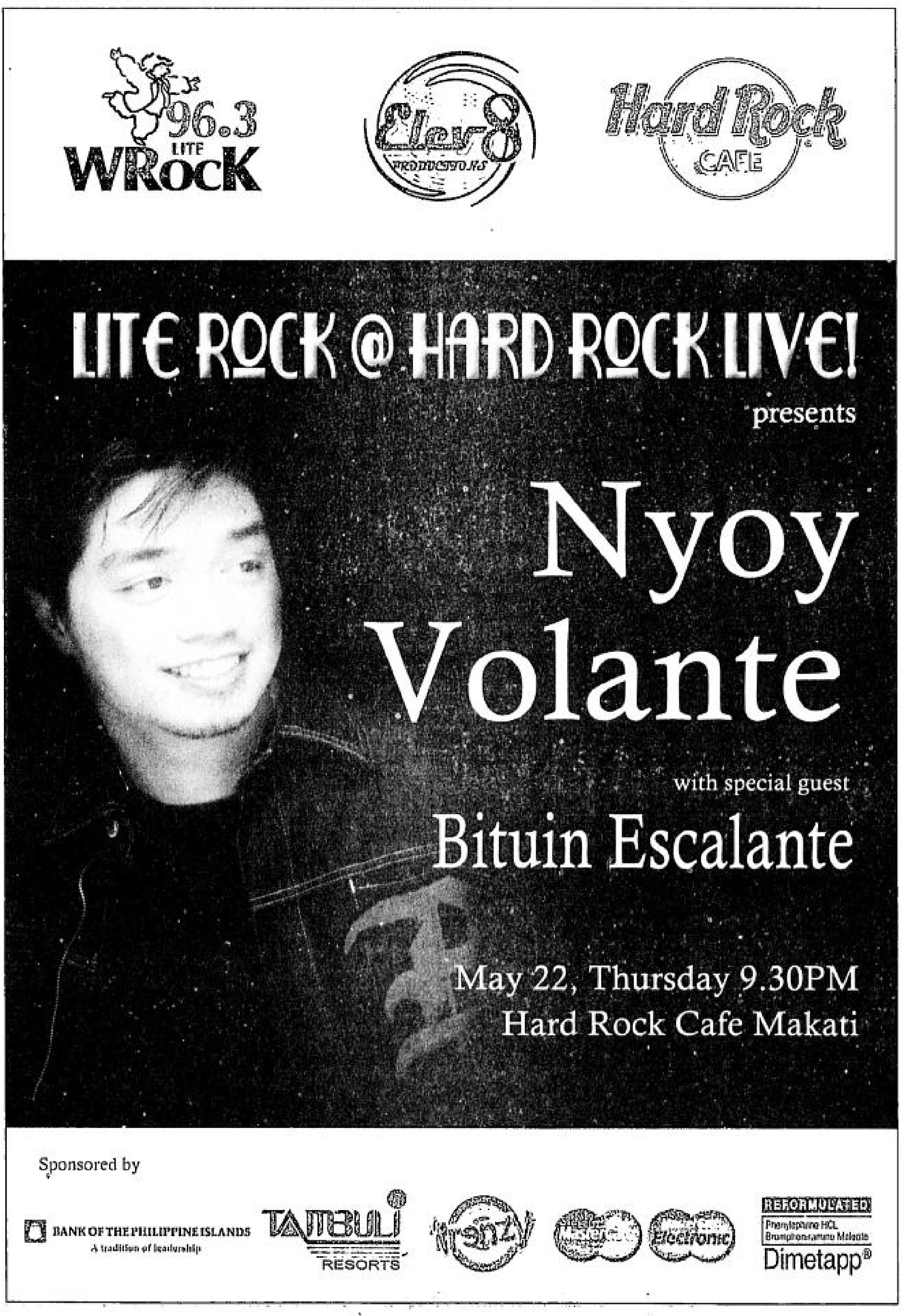
Former sports commissioner Richie Garcia is aiming to retain his crown in the centerpiece Open division, a 54-hole stroke play tournament exclusively for players 55 years old and above.

Also on tap in the three-day tournament is a 36-hole age-group competition with those aged 60-64 to compose Category II, 65-69 Category III, 70-74 Super Senior, and 75 and above Super Senior II.

The annual event is sponsored by the Philippine Sports Commission, DHL Worldwide Express, WWW Express and Airlift Asia Inc. The prizes for all the winners will be given by Mizuno and Master Sports Corp., which are also giving away raffle items along with Mitsubishi Motors, Taylor Made-adidas and Wilson Sports.

Negrido up by 9 shots in Tour

NONOY Negrido shot a 74 yesterday and took a nine-stroke lead over Aaron Dimabuyo after the penultimate round of the Samsung Jungolf Tour's seventh leg at the Tat Filipinas Golf Club course. Negrido, son of a teaching pro at Villamor, completed 36 holes at the up-and-down Tat Filipinas course at 145 after his opening round 71 with Dimabuyo behind him at 154 after a 76. In Class B, Gino Bunyi was leading the boys' division.



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Gorres defense slated June 1

By Salven L. Lagumbay
Contributor

CEBU City—He first thrilled Manila fans by stopping his foe in the undercard of the Manny Pacquiao starrer at the Luneta last March 15. On June 1, RP flyweight champ Z Gorres takes center stage when he defends his 112-lb title against tough Edgar Rodrigo at the Makati Coliseum.

The main event of "Showdown in Makati" will mark Gorres' first defense of his national title.

A member of Cebu's feared ALA Boys of sportsman Tony Aldeguer and now handled by lawyer-sportsman Rudy Salud, Gorres is undefeated in 12 pro fights, with seven wins coming inside the distance.

He stopped Roy Balataria for the interim RP title in a supporting bout to the Manny Pacquiao-Serikzhan Yeshmangbetov mainer at the Luneta.

Rodrigo, with a 9-3-4 win-loss-draw ledger spiked by four knockouts and fighting out of the Micca Stable of Yukichika Murayama, is expected to pose a major threat to Gorres' fledgeling hold on the flyweight belt.

"I am ready. I will ruin his future in boxing," Rodrigo was quoted as saying.

Gorres, however, remains focused on the task at hand, opting to hone his skills at the ALA Gym here in Cebu. He has been sparring with ex-WBC flyweight champ Malcolm Tuñacao, RP no. 1 flyweight Sherwin Paro, RP junior fly champ Bert Batawang, Arman Defensor, Cerilo Cabellon and a coterie of national amateur standouts under Aldeguer's program.

RP boxing...

From page A25

gon's lead piled in the first two rounds, however, and the Cadiz City find stood on the verge of matching his bronze medal finish in the 7th A. Socikas tournament in Kaunas, Lithuania last week.

``This is a good start for our boys and we hope that they continue with their fine showing," said Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines president Manny Lopez.

A. Socikas gold medalist and best fighter Arlan Lerio and Warlito Parrenas are seeing action Tuesday, needing just to win to gain a medal.

Lerio, the most senior of the group at 26, will tangle with Mexico's Abner Mares in the 54 kg division while Parrenas will battle Australia's Mohamed Alomar in the 51-kg class.

SPORTSWATCH

Manila Marathon up

THE INAUGURAL Manila Marathon hits the road on June 22, the organizing Manila Sports Council (Masco) announced yesterday. Masco chair Arnold "Ali" Atienza said no less than 10,000 runners are initially expected to vie in the footrace, dubbed as the country's version of the Boston Marathon. Atienza, son of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, said the Manila Marathon will be the principal component of the annual Araw ng Maynila celebration although the principal goal is to make the event a trademark of Philippine sports. "It is primarily about putting the Philippines in the world sporting map again," Atienza told the PSA Forum yesterday at the Manila Pavilion. The Manila Marathon is tipped to lure the country's top runners like Eduardo Buenavista, Roy Vence and Cristabel Martes.

BF Homes prevails

BF Homes nipped Alabang Hills, 291-290, to rule the first round of the Nokia Intervillage South golf tournament at the Eagle Ridge Golf Club in Trece Martirez, Cavite last Monday. It was the most closely-fought sectoral event so far in the three-month-long series sponsored by Nokia with last year's division champion Tahanan finishing third just five points behind BF Homes at 286. Four other teams—Alabang 400, Marcelo Green, Philamlife-Las Piñas and Merville Park stood within striking distance, making the final round of the 36-hole event truly an event to watch on June 23. Alabang 400 placed fourth with 281, Marcelo scored 278 for fifth, while Philamlife-Las Piñas and Merville pooled 265 and 262 points, respectively, under the Stableford scoring system. Rounding out the standings in the tournament among villages in Parañaque, Muntinlupa and Las Piñas are Levitown-Don Bosco (253), Pilar Village Golf (232) and United Parañaque (218).

Upset rocks netfest

UNSEEDED Kristine Ortega shocked No. 2 Jia Elesis, 6-3, 2-6, 6-0, yesterday to reach the girls' 12-under quarterfinals in the Alibor-St. Benilde Age-Group Tennis Championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center. Kristine's elder sister Katherine also advanced following a 7-6 (2), 6-3 victory over Joan Opulencia. In other matches, No. 1 Sarah Jane Lime routed Stephanie Borlongan, 6-0, 6-0, Linda Marie Santos defeated Zhane Quitara, 1-6, 6-4, 6-3, JV Custodio downed Liz Magaway, 6-4, 6-2, and Sally Mae Siso whipped Camille Zapatos, 6-2, 6-1. In the unisex 10-under class, No. 1 Bernardine Siso blasted Anthony Delavin, 6-2, 6-1, No. 2 Juan Pocholo Macalino dumped Fredmore Dominisac, 6-0, 6-0 and No. 3 Noel Agra waylaid Michael Alsa, 6-0, 6-1, to enter the quartefinals.

Rockwell 25K run set

THE COUNTRY'S top road runners get a chance to run and compete in the Singapore International Marathon later this year. This is what is at stake in the New Balance 25K Power Race set this Sunday morning at the Rockwell Center in Makati. "Last year, first-time champion Allan Ballester could not make it to the Chicago Marathon because of its proximity to the Asian Games and it was Tito Barrameda who was able to make the trip, this time we are hoping that the champions in the 25K distance will be able to make it," said event director Niño Sinco of Alternative Events Group. Anton Gonzales, president of title sponsor Planet Sports, said the event is co-sponsored by Cebuana-Lhuillier Pawnshop of sportsman Jean Henri Lhuillier, Powerade, the official energy drink, Viva Mineral Water, David's Salon, PRU Life UK, Power Bar, Fitness First, The Rockwell club, Mirror Magazine and Rockwell Center. Registration for the race is until May 23.

Ramos Cup Friday

THE YKL-Narciso Ramos Cup-Challenge of Champions fires off Friday (May 23) at the San Beda College gym, Intramuros, Manila. The tournament sanctioned by the Basketball Association of the Philippines and organized by the Philippine Integrated Chinese Athletic Association will gather the country's top collegiate commercial players in both the men's and women's side from established leagues in Metro Manila, Cebu and Zamboanga City. The men's division will be led by NCAA defending champion San Sebastian College. Ms Cristy Ramos, granddaughter of the late ambassador and daughter of former Philippine president Fidel V. Ramos, leads the organizing committee as project director of the event, while Yank Koc Le, owner of the sponsoring YKL Films, is the chair of the organizing committee.

Fil-Am tilt slated

THE NATIONAL Fil-Am-Cock Derby set for June 3, 5 and 7 at the Mandaluyong Coliseum has attracted more than 60 participants. OPMI president Vic Yu will host the three-day event sponsored by Sagupaan B-50 Forten, Sagupaan Mite Free Shampoo, Sagupaan Hammer Dewormer, Heritage Hotel, Pagcor Casino Filipino and Lakpue Drug's Washout Shampoo. The elimination round (2-cock) blasts off on June 3, followed by the 3-cock semifinals on June 5 and the finals (4-cock) on June 7. Entry fee is P45,000 and minimum bet is P22,000. For inquiries, contact 531-4003, 531-4005, 535-2341 and 534-4110.

Masbate bet shines

THE JUST-concluded 2003 edition of the Annual Magayon Festival 5-Cock Derby hosted by Albay Gov. Alfrancis Bichara proved to be successful again. Mayor Bing Abapo of Milagros, Masbate via his entry Adlaw San Milagros bagged solo championship, a duplication of Masbate Gov. Tony Kho's win last year. Backed by Thunderbird Power Feeds, makers of Thunderbird Platinum & Enertone and Univet makers of Bexan-XP & Vetracin Gold, the two-day event held at the Albay Astrodome in Legazpi City emerged as the biggest derby in Bicol. Assisting Gov. Bichara were pit manager Conrado Sarlon and Sonny Villalon.

Boob-tube booboos

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

HOST: You have been happily married with your husband for more than 10 years. How do you explain this?

Guest: We are open to each other. And we give each other pieces of advice.

(*Ay*, pieces of advice!)

***

Host: And you have such a talented daughter. She's an artist?

Guest: Yes. *Ine*-enrol *ko siya sa* art, *kaya magaling yan mag*-art!

(Promise, ha?)

***

Host: How can people tell if they have gout?

Guest: If it is being swelling, your foot, you know have a gout.

(Ah, so!)

***

Host: Why did you elope?

Guest: Because my family wanted me to marry a girl I did not love.

Host: So, you eloped with your wife now?

Guest: Of course. I cannot follow my family if they want to choose to my future wife!

(*Ano raw?*)

***

Host: What is your field, entemology?

Guest: It's the study of insects. For example, *ang ilan sa sinusurot ko ay* flies!

(*Ay, sinusurot!*)

***

Host: You're a bold star now; but we found out *na lumaki ka pala sa* convent school. *Papano ka naging* bold star, with such a conservative background?

Bold star: No, actually, *hindi naman ako lumaki sa* convent - Catholic school *lang*.

(*Sige na nga.*)

***

Host: What was your special talent in school? Did you win awards, medals?

Guest: Yes. I was a gowd diclimir!

(Biri gowd!)

***

Host: Why did you decide to specialize in making bamboo handicrafts?

Guest: Because the bamboo, which is the Philippines very abundant for!

(Ah, *pakiulit nga*?)

***

Host: Why do you like acting with (name of female star)?

Guest: For one important reason: She's open as far as an actress!

(*Ganoon, ha*?)

***

Host: What do you like about her as a person, as a friend?

Guest: She do not go around the bush!

(Mulberry, George W.–or otherwise?)

Mini-concert, street party, beauty pageant highlight 'Araw ng Makati'

SHOW TIME

A STREET party, a grand parade, a bar tour, mini-concert, singing contest, ballroom dancing competition, beauty pageant and a remote telecast of the noontime show "Eat Bulaga" will highlight the week-long celebration of the 333rd foundation day of the City of Makati, from May 26 to June 1.

Fast-rising R&B artist Nina, K247 band and actress Eula Valdez will be featured in a mini-concert for city employees and residents on May 26, after the launching ceremony at the Makati City Hall quadrangle, where Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay and this year's Ten Outstanding Students of Makati will unveil the billboard designs for the city's social marketing campaign.

On May 27, Miss Makati 2003 will be crowned at Mandarin Oriental Hotel. Featured performers are Jaya and comedian Jon Santos, with Eddie Mercado as pageant host.

On May 28, the Home Radio bar tour will go to Hard Rock Café at Glorietta 3 in Ayala Center.

On May 30 at 2:30 p.m., Mayor Binay, city officials, leaders of Makati's business community and representatives from civic and professional groups will lead the Makati grand parade on Ayala Avenue. Confetti will rain all over Ayala Avenue to welcome the colorful floats from different Makati companies, establishments and organizations, as well as marchers from the city's private and public sectors, and the barangays.

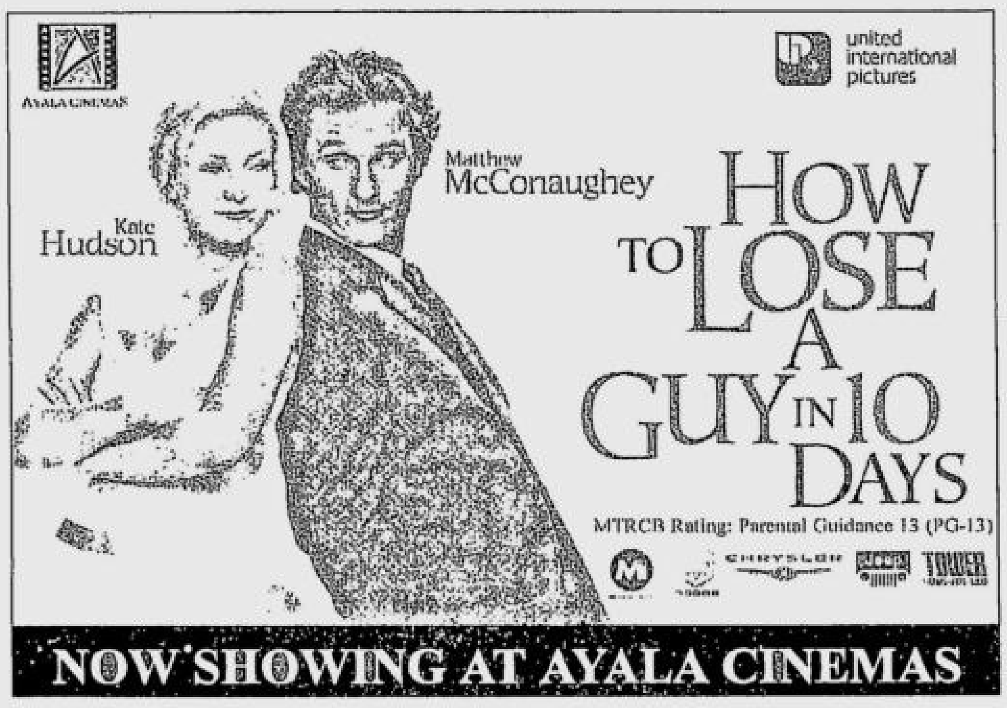
At 7 pm, San Miguel Beer will host a street party along Kalayaan Avenue near P. Burgos Street, featuring top retro and reggae bands and the San Miguel Beermen cagers.

On May 31, Saturday, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) will open a special counter at the Makati City Hall that would provide special passport service to Makati residents. Sexy actress Diana Zubiri will be among those who will get a passport for the first time.

Top-rating noontime show "Eat Bulaga" will go on a remote telecast from the University of Makati.

On June 1, the city's foundation day, the University of Makati (UMAK) grounds will be the venue for a day-long celebration which includes fun games, booths and giveaways for the entire family.

Residents and visitors will be treated to great bargains on clothes, household items and food at the *tiangge*, and can participate in the fun games and raffle promos with prizes from Coca Cola and San Miguel Beer.


AYALA CINEMAS
united international pictures
Kate Hudson
Matthew McConaughey
HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13 (PG-13)
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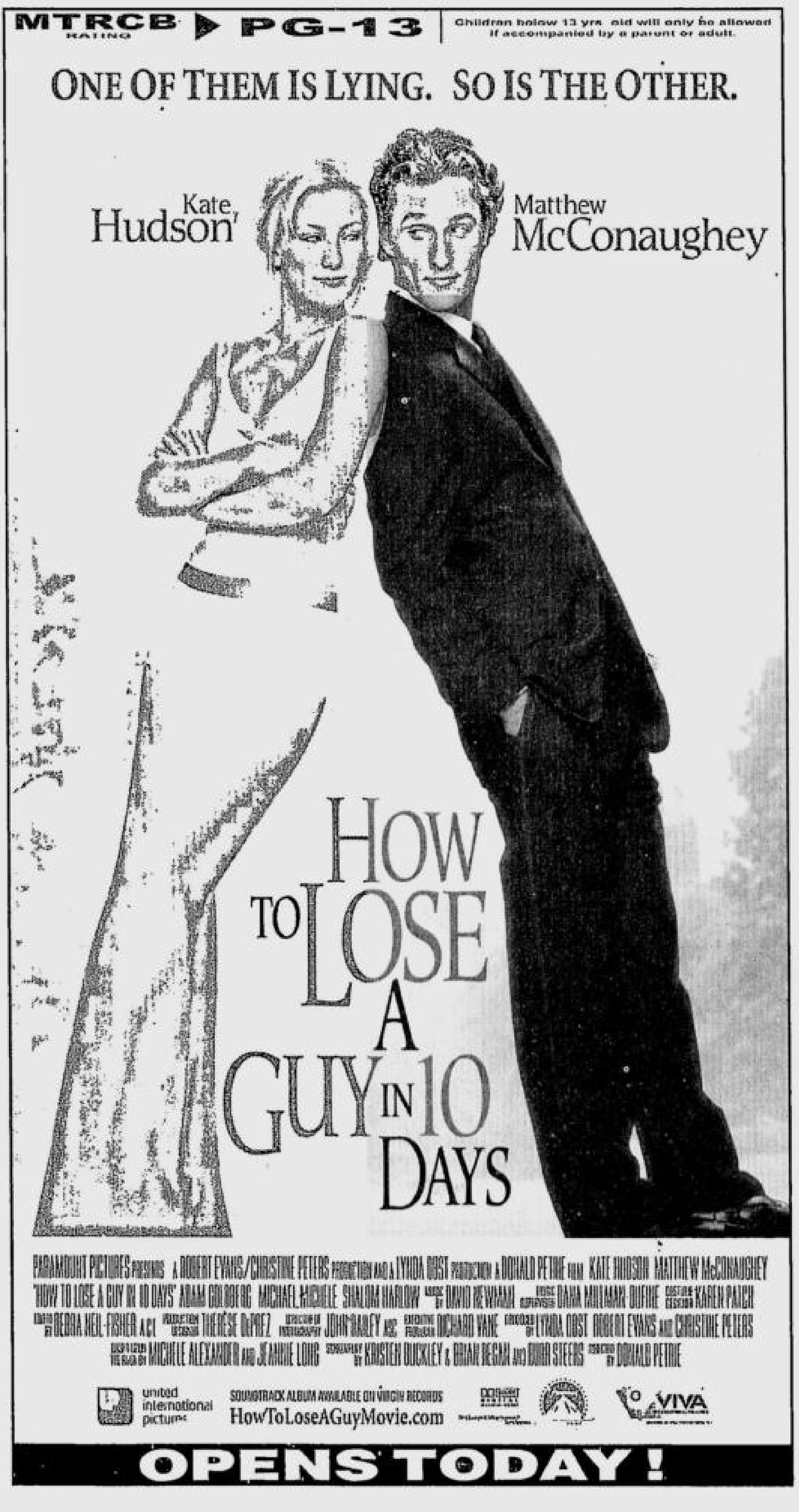
MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13
Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.
ONE OF THEM IS LYING. SO IS THE OTHER.
Kate Hudson
Matthew McConaughey
HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
PARAMOUNT PICTURES PRESENTS A ROBERT EVANS/CHRISTINE PETERS PRODUCTION AND A LYNDA OBST PRODUCTION A DONALD PETRIE FILM KATE HUDSON MATTHEW McCONAUGHEY "HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS" ADAM GOLDBERG MICHAEL MICHELE SHALOM HARLOW MUSIC BY DAVID NEWMAN MUSIC SUPERVISOR DANA MILLMAN DUFINE COSTUME DESIGNER KAREN PATCH EDITED BY DEBRA NEIL-FISHER A.C.E. PRODUCTION DESIGNER THERESE DePREZ DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY JOHN BAILEY ASC EXECUTIVE PRODUCER RICHARD VANE PRODUCED BY LYNDA OBST ROBERT EVANS AND CHRISTINE PETERS BASED UPON THE BOOK BY MICHELE ALEXANDER AND JEANNIE LONG SCREENPLAY BY KRISTEN BUCKLEY & BRIAN REGAN AND BURR STEERS DIRECTED BY DONALD PETRIE
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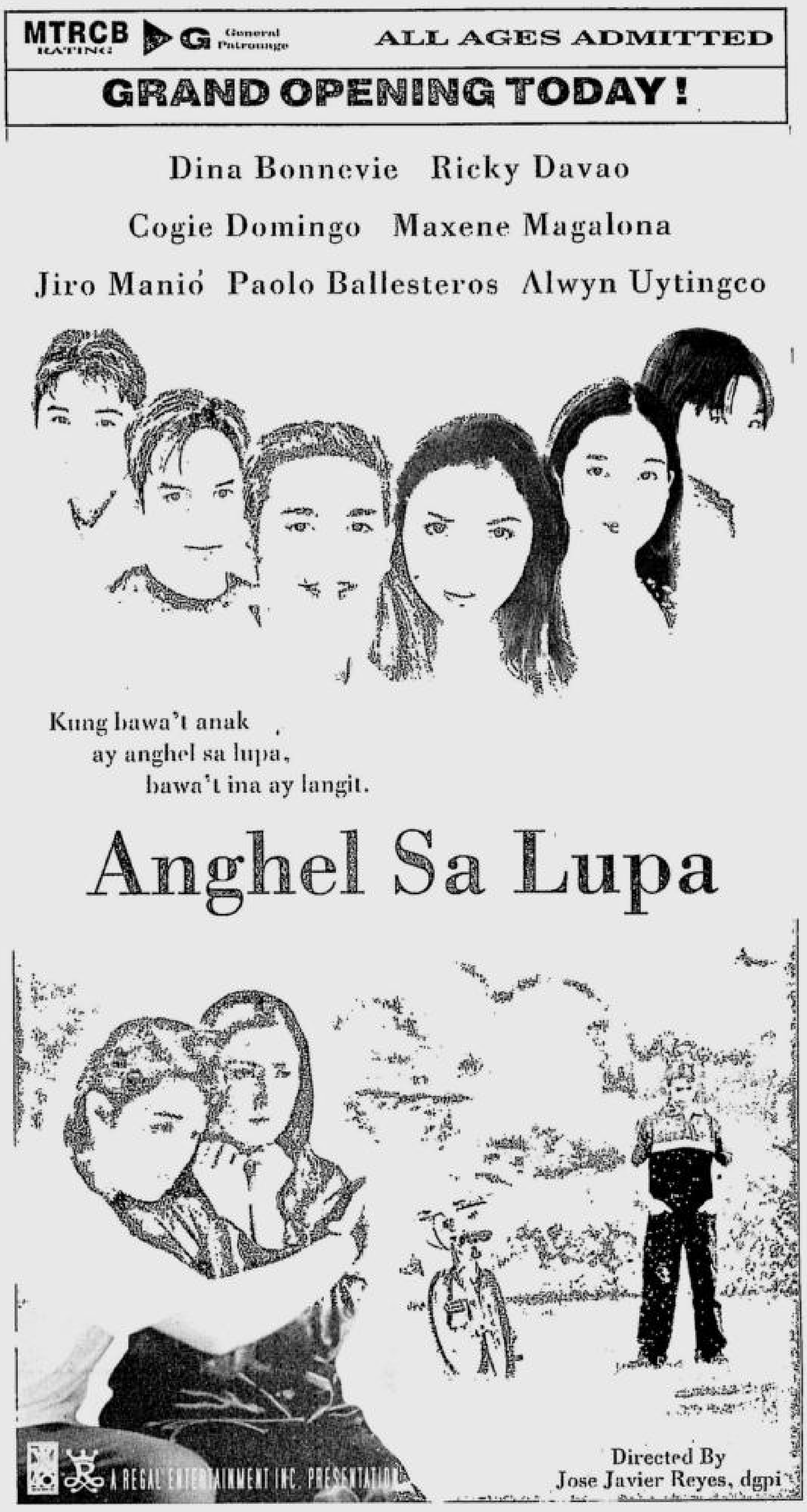
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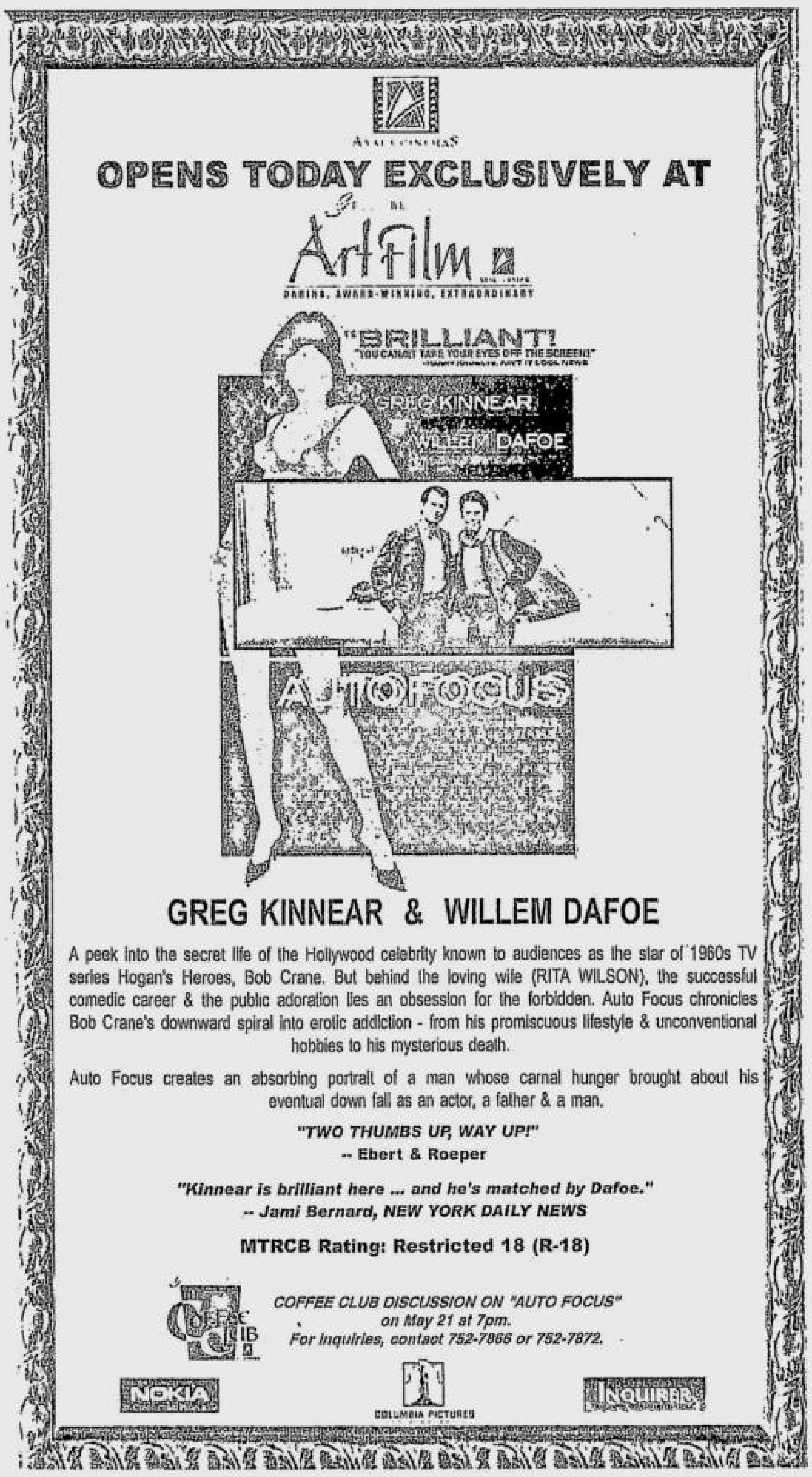
bawa't ina ay langit.
Anghel Sa Lupa
A REGAL ENTERTAINMENT INC. PRESENTATION
Directed By
Jose Javier Reyes, dgpi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GREG KINNEAR
WILLEM DAFOE
AUTO FOCUS
GREG KINNEAR & WILLEM DAFOE
A peek into the secret life of the Hollywood celebrity known to audiences as the star of 1960s TV series Hogan's Heroes, Bob Crane. But behind the loving wife (RITA WILSON), the successful comedic career & the public adoration lies an obsession for the forbidden. Auto Focus chronicles Bob Crane's downward spiral into erotic addiction - from his promiscuous lifestyle & unconventional hobbies to his mysterious death.
Auto Focus creates an absorbing portrait of a man whose carnal hunger brought about his eventual down fall as an actor, a father & a man.
"TWO THUMBS UP, WAY UP!"
-- Ebert & Roeper
"Kinnear is brilliant here ... and he's matched by Dafoe."
-- Jami Bernard, NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
MTRCB Rating: Restricted 18 (R-18)
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POWER PLANT

MATRIX: RELOADED **R13** 11:45,2:40, 5:35,8:30	**MATRIX: RELOADED** **R13** 12:40,3:35, 6:30,9:25	**MATRIX: RELOADED** **R13** 1:35,4:30, 7:25,10:20
SO CLOSE **R13** 12:40,3:00,5:20, 7:40,10:00	**THE HOURS** **R13** 12:00,2:25,4:50, 7:15,9:40	**HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS** **P13** 12:15,2:45,5:15,7:45,10:15

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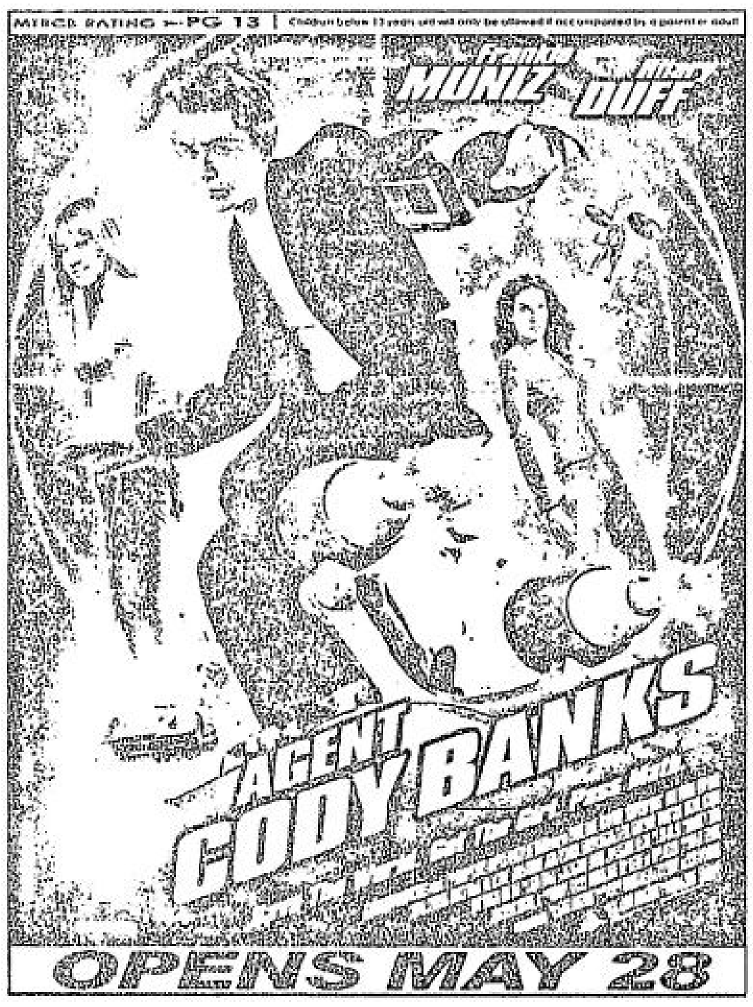
MTRCB RATING PG 13
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MUNIZ
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OPENS MAY 28
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JANUARY ISAAC
TONI GONZAGA and OYO BOY SOTTO
PAKNERS

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7

Ali 1	ANGHEL SA LUPA
Ali 2	DAYO
Ali 3	SO CLOSE
Ali 4	MATRIX RELOADED
Ali 5	MATRIX RELOADED
Ali 6	WALANG KAPALIT
Ali 7	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS

ARANETA COLISEUM

MAY 21	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
MAY 25	PBA GAMES
MAY 31	PBA FANS DAY
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JUNE 16 18 20	WORLD SLASHER CUP

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THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	HIRAM
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	HIRAM
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	DAYO
B	HIRAM
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	DAYO
CINEMA-2	ANGHEL SA LUPA
CINEMA-3	HIRAM
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	X-MEN 2
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	MATRIX RELOADED
CINEMA-6	KIKAY
CINEMA-7	TILL THERE WAS YOU
CINEMA-8	XEREX
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	MATRIX RELOADED
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	MATRIX RELOADED
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	SO CLOSE
CINEMA-12	HOW TO LOSE A GUY
CINEMA-14	RING 0
CINEMA-15	WALANG KAPALIT
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
CINEMA 1	WALANG KAPALIT
CINEMA 2	MATRIX RELOADED
CINEMA 3	FINAL DESTINATION 2
CINEMA 4	NATIONAL SECURITY
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

THEATRE MALL
GREENHILLS
NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 1	**MATRIX RELOADED** 11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00 **R13**
CINEMA 2	**HOW TO LOSE A GUY** 11:40, 2:10, 4:40, 7:10, 9:40 **PG-13**

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A new Episode for Mickey

TAKING THE PLUNGE, Mickey lounges in a beige and white shift.

STAR STYLE

"MI-KI, NOT My-kee," Mickey Ferriols says of the correct way to pronounce her first name. "Think, Mickey Mouse."

During the Star Style pictorial, the Assumption graduate with a Marketing degree talks about what she wants in her man. "Rich, we can work on that. *Guwapo*, not really. At least, presentable. A man must love me and me alone forever. Better if we love each other at the same time."

The American-Spanish-Chinese-Filipino *mestiza* also talks about the popular American-Pinoy basketball star, who's 6-foot-7 to her 5-foot- 5.

Told that she seemed cold and distant when she and the cager were seen together at a mall, Mickey says, "I'm not showy with my affection in public. But in private, I'm very cuddly."

When Mickey "disappeared" for more than three years, rumors flew fast: She was nursing a broken heart; she had a vice; she got pregnant and was not bringing up her baby by herself.

"I had a falling out with my talent manager," she explains, referring to Chit Ramos, who is with her during the pictorial. "My mind was *magulo*, then my career was derailed. My life seemed out of control. I left *Tita* Chit, just like that.

"I was suing her," Chit says.

"And for three years, I was falling in and out of love with three men," adds Mickey.

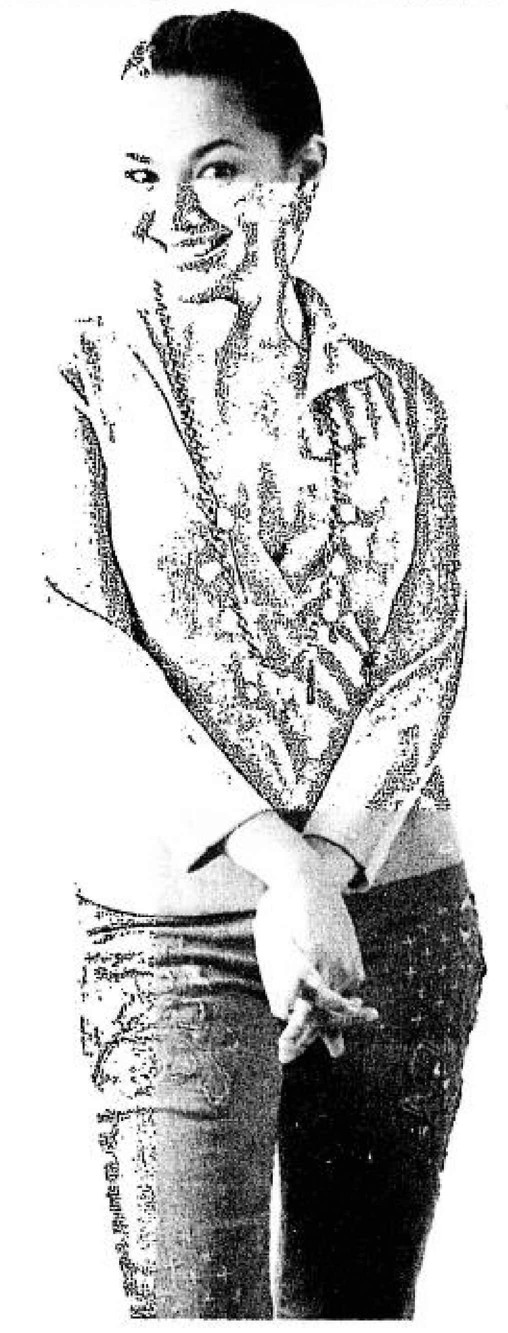
Chit asks, "Wasn't it four?" "No, *Tita, tatlo lang*."

Asked if she's with "someone" now, Mickey says, "When I came back to her fold, my manager and I agreed to prioritize my career."

Shifting to an entirely new subject, she says, "I have to lose 15 more pounds" because she's preparing to star in a movie with Aga Muhlach.

Ymmanwel Rico Provinio
Contributor

PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY LARRY P. LEVISTE
PHOTOGRAPHED BY ERNIE U. SARMIENTO
MAKE-UP BY PETER OF PATRICK ROSAS' TEAM
CLOTHES AND ACCESSORIES BY EPISODE & JESSICA IN GLORIETTA-3



LEAVE IT to cleavage, like Mickey does in knit top in sea foam green and embroidered jeans.

SHOW TIME

'ACOUSTIC MADNESS'

Blow, the band led by actor Diether Ocampo, performs in an acoustic night at Dish on Thursday, May 22. Blow will share the stage with guitarist Paolo Santos, Noel Cabangon and Overtone. Show starts 9 p.m. The bands will perform their original compositions and a recall of the '70s, '80s and '90s recordings of rock greats such as Sting, Eric Clapton, The Beatles, Doobie Brothers and more. "Acoustic Madness" is presented by PEG Productions, U at Rustans, PLDT, Sun Cellular, Essences at Rustans, ERG and Mule. Dish is at the 3rd Level of Rockwell's Power Plant Mall in Makati City. For reservations, call 898-1771 or 898-1824.

Quark Henares holds seminar

YOUNG director Quark Henares, who made his directorial debut in the Maui Taylor starrer "Gamitan," will conduct a digital handycam seminar for Avid club members and non-members alike on May 24 and 31 at Rockwell Club, from 1 to 6 p.m.

Avid Club members may attend the seminar for free, while non-members need to pay P500.

Participants not only get the chance to learn filmmaking tips from Henares, but also win exciting prizes like a Sony DSC-U20 Cybershot and other prizes.

In 2001, Henares won the Palanca Award for teleplay for his short film, "A Date with Jao Mapa."

For more information, call Mae or Almen at 525-3634 or e-mail at avid-club@mydestiny.net.

MTRCB RATING PG-13
OPENS TODAY !
THE "RING" PHENOMENON GOES BACK TO ITS ROOTS TO FIND YOUR WORST NIGHTMARE... SADAKO!
RING-0
the BIRTHDAY
Ring - O
She haunted you after she died. Now, she'll terrify you to death when she's alive!!!
リング
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Wally Gonzales at Billboard Club

SHOW TIME

BILLBOARD Club in Makati holds Rock 'N Roll Night Live! featuring Wally Gonzales & Friends tonight at 10 p.m., marking Gonzales' return to the live music circuit.

The night will relive the '70s when Pinoy rock flourished and produced artists like Mike Hanopol, Joey "Pepe" Smith, Resty Fabunan and Maria Cafra. Wally's repertoire will include classics like Eric Clapton's "Crossroads, Sunshine Of Your Love," the Allman's Brothers' "In Memory of Elizabeth Reed," Jimmy Hendrix's "Purple Haze," The Doors' "Light My Fire," Lynrd Skynrd's "Sweet Home Alabama" and some of the Juan de la Cruz Band's hits.

Gonzales carved a niche in Pinoy rock music as guitarist of Juan de la Cruz Band, whose instrumental album produced his signature piece, "Wally Blues."

Wally & Friends is composed of Dondi Ledesma on bass, Wowie Posadas on keyboards, Joonie Centeno on vocals and Armand Quimpo on second guitar.

On May 28, Billboard Club has the Carribean Grind, from 10 p.m. to the wee hours. Special prizes will go to those who come in tropical or beach outfits.

OLIVES

ABS-CBN ...

From page A32

employee reaches the age of 60.

"The question now is to whether management, particularly president Gabby Lopez, would extend Mr. Garcia's term," Manalastas pointed out.

"It is also possible that management would hire him as a consultant," she added.

Manalastas said she knows of several ABS-CBN executives who after retiring stayed on as consultants, like the late Rolly Cruz, who was consultant for the Metro Basketball Association (MBA) and the Sarimanok News Network (SNN).

Manalastas said she has no idea why the names of Santos-Concio, Gabunada, Olives and Jimenez came up.

"It seems the people are too excited," she said.

But she said it is not puzzling if management would pick any one from the batch.

"I think all of them are responsible leaders," she said. "For them to have reached their current positions, it means they are very competent and have contributed enough to the company."

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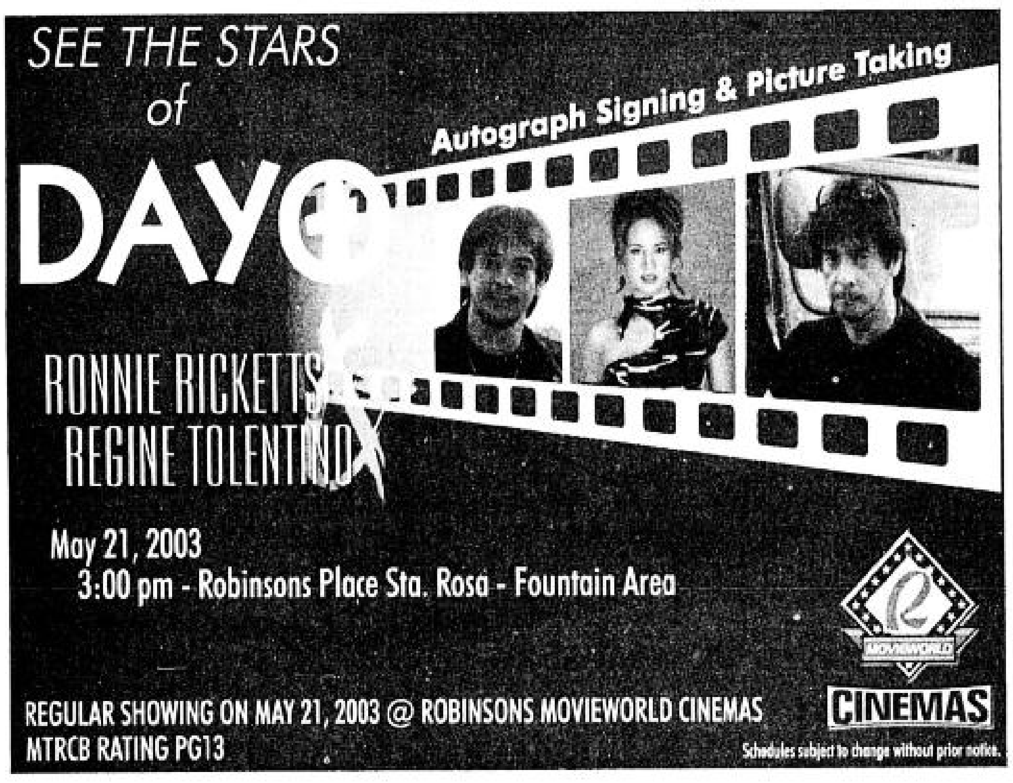

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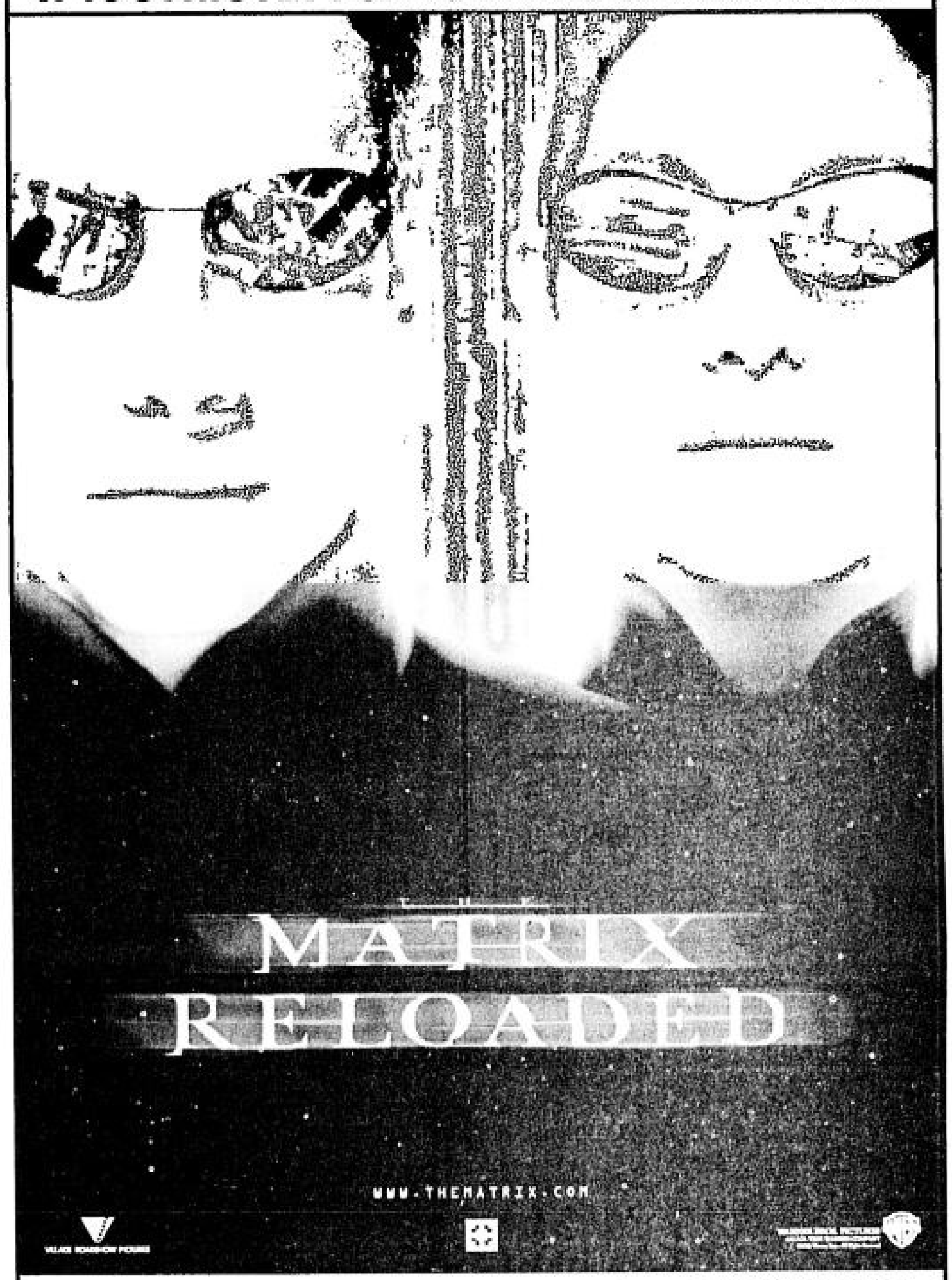

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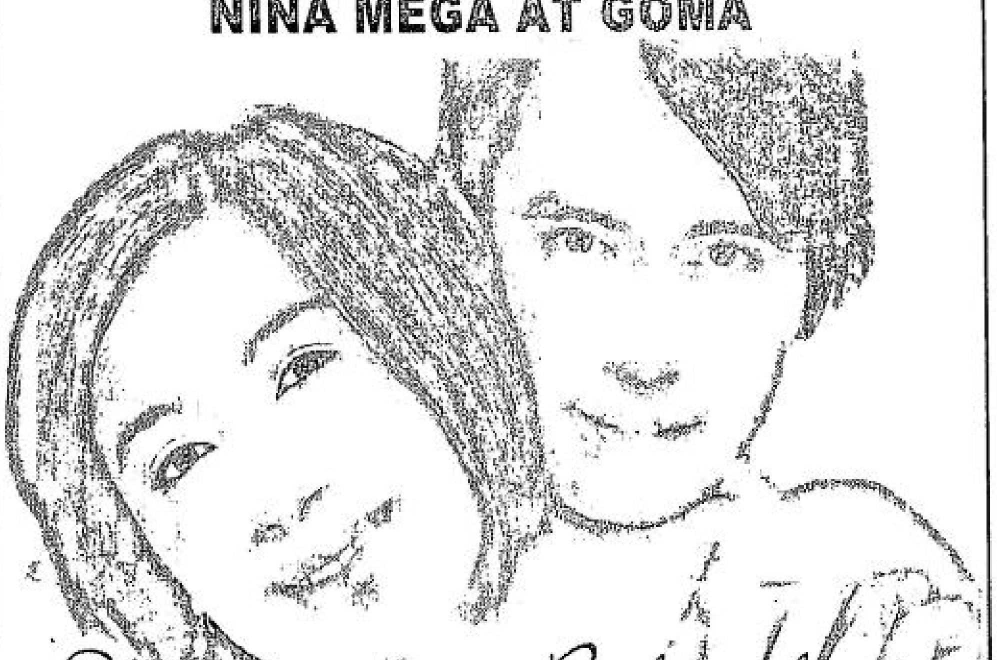

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ABS-CBN president may 'stay on or act as consultant'

By Marinel R. Cruz

SO WHO will replace ABS-CBN president Freddie M. Garcia, who is retiring in July when he turns 60?

Executive vice president Charo Santos-Concio is said to be being considered for the post, but there are said to be other names in the short list: sales and marketing executive Nick Gabunada, business development and special projects executive Jose Ramon "Monchet" Olives and senior vice president for integrated engineering group Ruben "Bon-Bon" Jimenez.

Vice president for corporate and legal affairs Maloli Manalastas said retirement is indeed a company policy, "but ABS-CBN management has yet to sit down on this matter."

She said retirement is automatic once an

ABS/A31

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BIR to sell Marcos assets on June 10

By Clarissa S. Batino

TWELVE pieces of property in San Juan, Parañaque, and Ilocos owned by the Marcos family have been seized by the Bureau of Internal Revenue and will be auctioned on June 10.

The BIR is also planning to conduct another bidding for 11 pieces of property in Leyte belonging to Imelda Marcos worth about P5.7 billion that were seized in the early '90s. The bureau declared a failed bidding for the assets in July 1993 when no bidder showed up.

The real estate assets form part of the payment for the P42 billion in estate and income tax liabilities of the Marcos family that have not been settled with the BIR.

The auction next month is only the second time for the internal revenue agency to try and make money out of the Marcos property that had sustained P19 billion in income tax liabilities since the family lost power and P23 billion in back estate taxes since 1991 when the former dictator died.

The BIR said that under the law, when a taxpayer cannot settle his obligations, then the internal revenue agency could go after his or her property.

Combined, the real estate assets for sale in June are about 5.5 hectares of which roughly 4.7 hectares are in Ilocos, 5, 500 square meters in San Juan and Mandaluyong, and 2,500 square meters in Parañaque.

The auction will be held separately in the respective city halls except for the Ilocos property that will be sold in the municipal hall of Curimao.

The zonal value of the six pieces of property in San Juan and Mandaluyong named after the late president was placed at about P111 million.

The BIR is counting on additional revenues from administrative efforts including the sale of confiscated property to deliver more funds for state coffers. The BIR, which collects more than 70 percent of the government's annual earnings, must raise P424 billion this year.

The BIR said the Marcos family failed to pay income taxes on the earnings from their property. The family has not paid estate taxes as well on these assets after the former president died. An estate tax must be paid six months after a person died and before the assets could be transferred to the heirs.

The BIR's cash and collection department said the bureau could only sell the property after it has served a notice of levy, a legal document formally confiscating the asset. The notice of levy was served on Mrs. Marcos last March 25, according to a senior BIR official.

The tax agency said it was having a hard time running after the Marcos assets because it could only go after the pieces of property that were not sequestered by the Presidential Commission on Good Government.

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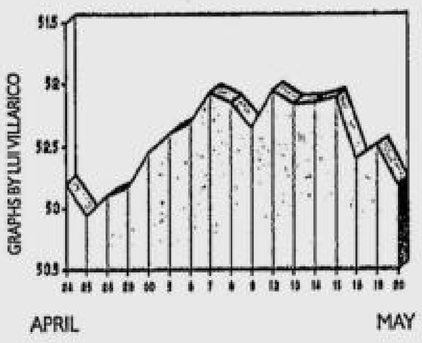

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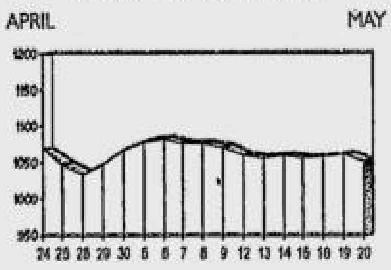
STOCK MARKET

Profit-taking pulls stocks lower

PLDT and Globe Telecom led stocks lower yesterday as investors took their cue from the steep decline on Wall Street.

The main Philippine index ended down 9.82 points or 0.92 percent at 1,053.12 after the Dow Jones industrial average sagged 2.15 percent on Monday on fears about US economic growth.

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Turnover rose to P257.3 million from Monday's P185.93 million. Losers beat gainers 25 to 22 and there were 31 stocks unchanged.

"Sentiment abroad is turning toward profit-taking because of signs that the US economy, which incidentally is the Philippines' largest trading partner, is weakening," said AB Capital economic analyst Jose Vistan.

Analysts also said investors were still not convinced of the government's fiscal discipline despite favourable January to April budget deficit data.

"The deficit problem will remain a problem despite the improving revenue performance relative to the government target. Investors are now looking at the government's ability to contain expenditures," Vistan said.

BPI Securities investment analyst Spencer Yap expected the market to further consolidate in the coming session unless positive developments lift the market's gloom.

Reuters

DHL bullish on RP, expands cargo facilities

By Doris C. Dumlao

BULLISH on a sustained double-digit volume growth in the Philippines, integrated parcel, express and logistics provider DHL said it has pumped in $30 million into the Philippine market to beef up its onshore facilities and was ready to invest more.

Top officials of DHL, which was recently bought by German transport and logistics giant Deutsche Post World Net and integrated with Danzas Air &Ocean and Euro Express, announced the group's rosy outlook for the Philippines and the rest of the Asia-Pacific region.

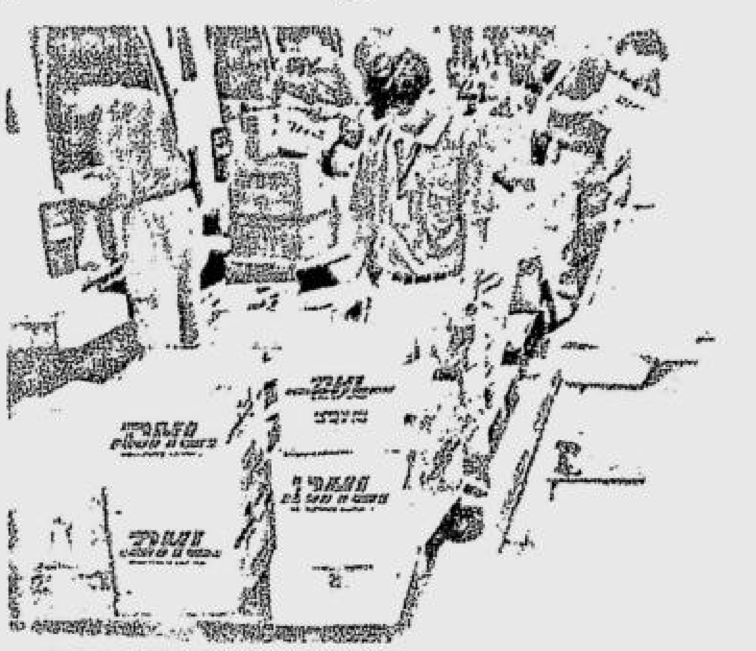
"It is very promising. Although there are factors going on in the world that will impact on imports and exports, the fact is, we still see a double-digit growth for both the Philippines and the Asia-Pacific," DHL Express Philippines country manager Charles Brewer said in a briefing yesterday.

"If you want to be a little more specific, if you take the Philippine imports and exports, DHL is growing much faster than those numbers. We are going faster than the market," he added.

Brewer said the group's double-digit volume growth in the Philippines was what had encouraged DHL to invest about $30 million in the country over the last two years. This, he noted, was a significant share compared to the group's investments in other markets in the region.

"There will be more (investments) to come," he said. He noted that the group has had to spend

DHL/ B3



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TECHNICAL SUPPORT FROM PICPA

BIR to widen scope of tax-mapping operations

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue is set to team up with the Philippine Institute for Certified Public Accountants (Picpa) to widen the scope of its crackdown on tax evaders.

Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr. said the move of the BIR to tap technical support from Picpa was intended to extend the bureau's tax mapping operations, which have started in various regions nationwide after it was piloted in Metro Manila.

Parayno said the BIR and Picpa had been holding talks on the details and extent of cooperation needed in detecting tax leakage and enhancing revenue collection.

"The need to widen the extent of the BIR's tax mapping operation, brought about by the discovery of a high level of tax violations in the country, necessitates the support from outside organizations such as Picpa. The number of the current BIR workforce seems to be insufficient to cover larger areas, where investigation into the tax compliance of more business establishments would be conducted," Parayno said in a recent interview.

According to Picpa president Crisanto Castro Jr., the organization is already preparing proposals as to how it can support the tax mapping program of the BIR.

He said one form of assistance it could give the BIR could be in the gathering of of data from various government agencies, such as the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Land Transportation Office and the Assessor's Office. The data gathered could be used to confirm tax declarations submitted by the taxpayers to the BIR.

Crisanto said Picpa had also proposed to help the BIR improve its tax registration form.

He said Picpa was also willing to provide additional manpower for the conduct of the tax mapping program of the BIR, and that the bureau had already expressed its intention to finance the said move.

"I will meet with (Deputy Commissioner Estelita) Aguirre next week to discuss the proposals on how Picpa can help the BIR. Once finalized, the tax mapping programs of the BIR and Picpa will probably kick-off in the third quarter of the year and will be piloted in Metro Manila," Castro said in an interview.

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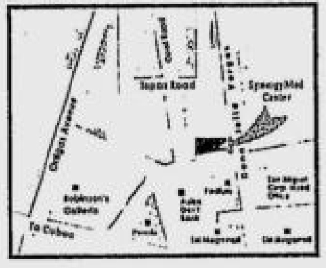

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2 restaurants fined for false advertising

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

TWO popular restaurant chains—Cabalen and Kamay-Kainan—have been penalized by the Department of Trade and Industry for the deceptive pricing of their eat-all-you-can meals.

The DTI filed administrative charges against Cabalen and Kamay-Kainan branches in West Avenue for failing to include the value- added tax in their display panels.

"Advertising an amount that is lesser than what the customer actually has to pay is false and misleading," acting Trade and Industry Secretary Adrian Cristobal Jr. said.

The DTI reported that while their respective ads showed that Cabalen charges P222 per person and Kamay-Kainan P198 per person for the buffet meals, customers actually pay more because the restaurants added a 10-percent expanded value added tax (Cabalen also adds a 3-percent municipal tax) in the bill.

Cristobal said that Cabalen and Kamay-Kainan violated Department Administrative Order No. 4's provisions that required that price tags, labels, markings and price lists to indicate the prices of goods and services incorporating therein all price component such as the VAT. Also, the same rules require that advertisements used to inform the price of goods or service should include the VAT.

He explained that these rules were meant to protect consumers and prevent restaurant operators from arbitrarily charging their clients. "We want to stop the constant price adjustments by traders without prior notification to clients," Cristobal said.

Cabalen and Kamay-Kainan were fined P5,000 each and were given one month to revise and adjust the prices in their menus.

Cristobal said the DTI had received complaints from several customers of the 2 restaurants' West Avenue branches who submitted the official receipts as evidence to the agency.

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Court ruling on Meralco seen driving away investors

THE SUPREME Court's decision ordering the Manila Electric Co. to refund about P28 billion that it overcharged its customers is driving away investments in the power industry, and may result in another nightmare of blackouts between the years 2006 and 2008.

Peter Wallace of The Wallace Business Forum, a think tank that provides advisory services to chief executives and multinational companies on the potentials of doing business in the Philippines, said this in a paper entitled "The Cost of Ignoring Economics."

In the paper, Wallace said no investor was currently interested in the country's power sector mainly because the Supreme Court's decision made it unattractive and too risky.

Wallace added that the negative effects of the SC decision on the power sector could also spill over to other industries because it showed that the country did not have solid rules to protect investors' interest.

He said the risks in entering the power sector made it pointless for a possible investor to invest in it and in other industries that were regulated by the government. "Why invest in a complicated, difficult, stressful business when you can buy bonds and go play golf?" said Wallace.

In a telephone interview, Wallace said his company was now experiencing difficulty in convincing clients to invest in the Philippines after the SC made that decision on the Meralco case.

He added though that his company had not lost confidence in the country's economic potentials.

"There are still potentials in investing in the Philippines, but the economic impact of court decisions should make the country more careful from now on," warned Wallace. *Michelle V. Remo*

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NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the annual meeting of the stockholders of **INTERPHIL LABORATORIES, INC.** will be held at **the Makati Sports Club, Salcedo Village, Makati City, Philippines on June 11, 2003 at 3:00 P.M.**

The AGENDA for the meeting shall be as follows:

1. Call to order;
2. Certification by the Corporate Secretary on the sending of notices and existence of a quorum;
3. Reading and Approval of minutes of the last Annual Stockholders' Meeting;
4. Report of the President;
5. Approval of the Financial Statements for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2002;
6. Ratification by a majority vote of the stockholders, of actions taken by the Board of Directors and Officers of the Corporation since the last annual meeting of the stockholders;
7. Election of Directors;
8. Appointment of External Auditors;
9. Transactions of such other matters as may properly come before the meeting;
10. Other Matters;
11. Adjournment.

If you are unable to attend the meeting, but would like to be represented thereat, you may submit your proxy to the Corporate Secretary at the Third Floor, Zuellig Building, Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City, on or before **June 03, 2003**, together with a board resolution authorizing your representative, in case of corporate stockholders. Proxies received after **June 03, 2003** shall not be recognized for the meeting.

Registration starts at 2:00 P.M. Only stockholders of record as of **April 25, 2003** are entitled to vote and be voted during the meeting. For your convenience in registering your attendance, please have available some form of identifications, such as your Community Tax Certificate, Passport or Driver's License.

Canlubang, Laguna, May 14, 2003.

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COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

HOLY COW! Our Favorite Publisher committed two grave diplomatic booboos at Monday night's White House dinner reception.

Favorite Publisher arrived after President Macapagal-Arroyo and her official party had already been ushered to the White House for the state dinner with US President Bush, according to the Washington grapevine.

Favorite Publisher had to be escorted on foot by the Secret Service from the neighboring Blair House, where the GMA party had assembled prior to the dinner, just to be able to catch up with the formal function.

It was not immediately clear why Favorite Publisher, who prides himself as a diplomatic ally savvy ex-foreign correspondent, arrived late, 10 minutes by one account, for the official, much-coveted function.

Not only was he tardy, but Favorite Publisher was also inappropriately attired for the formal diplomatic function.

Instead of the required tuxedo and black tie, Favorite Publisher came dressed in a dark blue suit and a regular white shirt adorned with a bow tie.

Favorite Publisher had earlier announced that he had been invited to the "White House state luncheon," but that he was declining the singular honor since, he said, he had to go to Mexico and New York City on a private trip.

But, in a sudden U-turn, Favorite Publisher days later announced no less than on the front page of his newspaper that President Macapagal-Arroyo herself had asked him to reconsider and join him in the White House affair as her personal guest.

According to the Malacañang grapevine, National Security Adviser Roilo Golez had to give up his seat at the dinner just to accommodate Favorite Publisher.

Despite his inclusion, Favorite Publisher continued with his attacks on GMA adviser Roberto Romulo, who was in charge of the US visit preparations, suspecting that the former foreign secretary was the source of the news leaks.

Romulo was also at the White House dinner, although seated far away from Favorite Publisher.

GMA: Good mileage in America

THANKS to her "unwavering" support for the Bush policy on Iraq, visiting President Macapagal-Arroyo is getting good mileage from the American media, both liberal and conservative.

The pro-Republican Fox News interrupted its regular programming Monday morning to broadcast live the Rose Garden ceremony, and followed it up with a panel discussion on the implications of the Philippine President's visit.

Cable channel MSNBC followed Fox's live strategy, as well as updated coverage lasting until well over midnight.

The Monday editions of USA Today and the Washington Post both carried opening day stories of the GMA visit, the Post leading with an Iligan-datelined story with "Philippine Forces Launch Attacks on Muslim Rebels" for its calendar story.

The USA Today had a more analytical slant, "Bush rewards backers of Iraq war/Supporters get US hospitality; critics not invited," chronicling how the Bush White House uses carrot-and-stick tactics to treat allies and opponents of the US war on Iraq.

Heard through the grapevine

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo will chill out and play golf for two days in the postcard-pretty seaside resort of Monterey, California, before flying back to Manila this weekend.

Her two Castilaloy *kumpadres* Endika Aboitiz and Enrique Razon Jr. are in charge of the accommodations.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at scocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

DHL bullish on RP, expands cargo facilities

From page B1

more to handle escalating volumes in the country, specifically for facilities, information technology solutions, new generation scanners, distribution facilities as well as people development.

Overall, the logistics provider has so far invested about $350 million in the Asia-Pacific region, including about $100 million for its hub in Hong Kong. It has six other hubs in Asia—those in Bangkok, Seoul, Singapore, Sydney and Tokyo.

Although DHL does not have a hub in the Philippines yet, DHL Danzas Air & Ocean Philippines official Michael Raeuber said the group's commitment to the local market was even stronger than other competitors. With the consolidation, the DHL-Danzas group now controls about 40 percent of the domestic logistics market and employs about 2,000 people.

DHL Worldwide Express Philippines and Danzas AEI yesterday announced the relaunch of their parcel, express and logistics business' visual identity under the new DHL brand.

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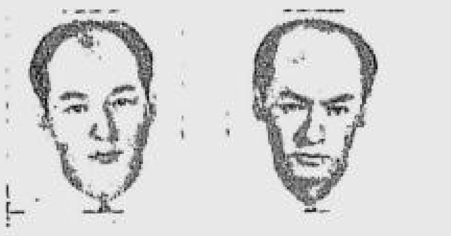

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RP wants to end IMF monitoring

By Clarissa S. Batino

BRUSHING aside recommendations from Washington, Malacañang is convinced that it is about time for the Philippines to end more than two decades of assistance from and monitoring by the International Monetary Fund as soon as the existing post-program monitoring expires.

Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri said that President Macapagal-Arroyo believed that the Philippines was strong enough to graduate from the IMF program after 23 years.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura, the country's chief negotiator with the IMF, along with Neri and other members of the government team met yesterday afternoon with the IMF mission for the final leg of the 12-day review of the country's economic performance under the post-program monitoring or PPM.

Extending the PPM was discussed "superficially" by the government after the idea was brought up by United States Assistant Secretary of State Jim Kelly.

Concerned over the country's budget deficit, sources said Kelly urged government officials to consider extending the PPM for another year or two.

Neri supported the exit from the PPM saying there was no longer any need for the IMF monitoring given the improving fiscal numbers and a sustained growth in the economy. The budget deficit in April stood at P6.58 billion, the lowest since December 2001, on strong revenue collection.

A monetary official, however, said last week that the government might consider an extension of the PPM to improve investor confidence and that of the creditors who might be more comfortable to do business in the Philippines if there was an IMF seal of good housekeeping.

"An IMF program is not a fiscal booster. A country enters into an IMF program primarily to boost its balance of payments," said Neri. To him, the country's external payments position had remained healthy.

The BSP believed that the current account position would remain at a surplus of $2.4 billion. The BOP should also register a surplus of $100 to $200 million.

The PPM calls for the IMF to conduct a twice-a-year review of the country's progress, using its prescriptions and the government's target as basis in rating the Philippines' performance.

Board may be tasked to audit the auditors

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

(Third of a series)

SPECIAL REPORT

THE CORPORATION Code requires external auditors to look into the books and records of listed companies to provide an independent assessment of financial statements.

The operative word is independent. The Code of Ethics of Certified Public Accountants said that auditors should be independent "in appearance and in fact" to be able to perform its duty to the public—that is to present the financial statements as they are.

The collapse of Enron Corp. and the following torrent of investigations of companies with hyped up profits, however, have questioned the independence of the auditing firms such as Arthur Andersen, which eventually closed.

The investigations in the United States showed the possibility that Arthur Andersen might have turned a blind eye to the faults of Enron because it had been a client for years and it was earning considerable sums of money from lucrative non-audit services such as consulting.

Two hats

All major auditing firms worldwide and their partners in the Philippines such as SGV & Co., Joaquin Cunanan and Co., Laya and Mananghaya offer both services—auditing and consulting—and there lies a possible conflict of interest.

The Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants (Picpa) said in a position paper submitted to Congress that the practice of public accounting was no longer confined to audit services but had diversified to include other specialized areas like consulting and bookkeeping.

Picpa said that while these activities were not different from auditing in terms of the required knowledge in accounting practices and standards, they differed significantly in terms of objectives.

Audit services aim to provide independent assessment of the accuracy of recorded financial data, while consulting has the ultimate goal of increasing a client's profit.

"These conflicting objectives undermine the required independence of CPA auditors," Picpa said.

Foreign and local auditing firms, however, have been able to grow both sides of their business for decades because internal control measures prevented a group working on one side of the business from dealing with the staff doing the other business.

Others have separate companies doing pure consultancy work to preserve the independence of the auditing side of the business.

Conflict of interest

For a long time, corporate clients—and the public—did not seem to mind that arrangement. That was until the Enron scandal put into the limelight the conflict of interest aspect of this setup.

"No one has anticipated the serious threat this conflict of interest could inflict on the accounting profession and the public. Accounting firms continue to provide consulting services to their audit clients concurrent with audit engagement as a strategy to increase revenue," Picpa said.

"Not until the occurrence of a series of audit scandals did the public and the authorities realize that such a conflict of interest is indeed a problem that must be addressed," Picpa added.

Major American accounting firms already responded to the backlash against the industry by spinning off the consulting side of their business into separate companies while government regulators have barred accountants from providing a variety of consulting services.

Philippine setting

The Philippine SEC has also taken similar moves to improve the regulation of accounting firms and to enable them to maintain their independence.

SEC Chair Lilia R. Bautista said in a recent speech that the SEC was supportive of a proposal from Congress to pass a law establishing a board that would be tasked to oversee the auditing of public companies.

"With our country having its own share of corporate scandals, the private and public sectors were in agreement that a law is now necessary in the Philippines," Bautista said.

Mario Mananghaya, managing partner of Laya and Mananghaya, however, cautioned against adopting standards that were designed to regulate American accounting firms.

Mananghaya added that it was unfair to say that local accounting firms have been complacent and were not following auditing rules to the letter.

"I totally disagree that accounting firms have become complacent because we haven't. Competition is there to keep us on our toes," Mananghaya said.

He said accounting firms have not changed the way they do audit, but business has certainly changed.

"It is the business landscape that has become more complex. There is the advent of information technology and cross-border transactions," Mananghaya stressed.

Coping with changes

Many accountants, however, have not been able to keep up with these changes in the business landscape, thus, impairing their ability to give a fair opinion on the financial statements of corporations.

The SEC, thus, has proposed that a board be created and authorized to prescribe continuing professional education requirements for Certified Public Accountants.

"We believe that continuing professional education is a must for CPAs, especially those involved in public companies," Bautista says.

BAUTISTA

Continuing education becomes even more imperative in the light of the Philippine government's commitment to shift to the use of International Accounting Standards from the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles used mainly in the United States.

The IAS is a set of accounting standards that was formulated by a committee established in 1973 to harmonize the financial standards used in each country to facilitate cross-border trade and investments.

Unlike GAAP, the IAS emphasizes on transparency of financial information rather than on complex details.

Changing standards

The European Union has pushed for the adoption of IAS for most of its 6,000 publicly traded companies by 2005 because it found the US GAAP rules sorely lacking, leading to bogus earnings reports from companies such as Enron.

The EU sees the IAS as an anti-Enron weapon because these standards mandate companies to consolidate the balance sheets of private partnerships or "special-purpose" entities into one.

Enron used scores of these special purpose entities, which are above board according to GAAP, to hide the real extent of its debt burden and to inflate profit.

It would take some time before the Philippines, which patterned most of its accounting principles after that of the US, could shift to the IAS but moves are under way.

The Philippine Accounting Standards Council, composed of members of the auditing profession and government agencies, has already started adopting IAS to replace existing accounting standards.

Except for the partners of top global auditing firms and some medium-sized accounting firms, most practitioners, however, do not follow these standards strictly.

(To be continued)

SEC seen keeping June 7 deadline for lending firms

By Elena R. Torrijos

UNLESS the Securities and Exchange Commission again extends the deadline for lending investors to convert into financing companies, more than 10,000 of them may have to stop operating by June 7.

The SEC had expressed reluctance to extend anew the June 7 deadline for lending investors organized as single proprietorships or partnerships to apply with the SEC for conversion into financing companies.

The original deadline was set for May 2 but it was extended when only 118 out of an estimated 10,000 non-corporate lending investors had applied for conversion.

Out of the 118, the SEC had approved 40 with the rest of the applications still pending.

SEC officials earlier expressed concern that unless properly regulated as financing companies, some lending investors could be used as vehicles for investment scams.

Some pseudo-investment firms that have allegedly victimized thousands of investors such as the Multitel Group reportedly started out as lending investors.

Earlier, SEC Chair Lilia Bautista said that some lending investors were found to have violated their corporate charters and the country's securities laws by borrowing from more than 19 lenders to finance their operations.

When placed under the SEC's supervision as financing companies, the activities of these lending investors could be more properly monitored.

To qualify for conversion into financing companies, lending investors will have to meet minimum capital requirements.

Under the rules of the SEC, financing companies operating within Metro Manila must have a capital base of P10 million, P5 million if they operate in other cities and P2.5 million if located in municipalities.

Philam Plans sees 20% sales growth

PHILAM Plans Inc., the pre-need unit of the Philamlife group, is targeting this year a 20-percent increase in sales, as measured by first year payments, to P1.6 billion from P1.3 billion last year.

"We're very serious in expanding our market share," Philam Plans president and chief executive Jesus Hofileña said.

Hofileña said the pre-need company, which was second in sales in the first quarter this year, aimed to strengthen business of both its education and memorial plans.

At present, Philam Plans' sales come largely from its pension plan products.

"We're confident that pension will do very well (this year)," Hofileña said.

To some extent, however, the performance of the pre-need industry as a whole, he said, would depend on how well the country performs, particularly in the second half of this year.

Hofileña said the company's strategy would be to improve its distribution network through alliances with third-party marketing groups and to offer more products, particularly for the education segment.

In terms of capital expenditures, Hofileña said the company would spend "very little" because the company was not likely to expand its office network. *Elena R. Torrijos*

INTEREST RATES

May 20, 2003-
MART1 Rates

Benchmark Interest Rates	MART1 19-May-03 (%)	MART1 19-May-03 (%)
1 Month	7.2208	7.2269
3 Months	7.2227	7.2169
6 Months	8.145	8.2269
1 Year	8.5885	8.5846
2 Years	9.25	9.2558
3 Years	10.2289	10.2346
4 Years	10.95	10.9173
5 Years	11.2885	11.2673
7 Years	11.6635	11.6827
10 Years	11.8788	11.8923
20 Years	12.8192	12.8288
25 Years	13.3308	13.3308

SOURCE: MART/BLOOMBERG

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Tuesday, May 20, 2003)

Stocks	Open	High	Low	Close	Volume
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	14.75	15	14.75	15	4,200
Bank of the Phil. Islands	34.5	34.5	34	34	204,000
Citystate Savings Bank	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	23.5	23.75	23.5	23.75	64,900
First E-Bank Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	40,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	27	27.5	26.5	26.5	58,500
Philippine National Bank	23.25	23.25	23	23.25	58,800
Phil. Savings Bank	27	27	27	27	1,700
Union Bank of the Phil.	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	167,000
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	150,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1450	1450	1450	1450	2,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1060	1060	1040	1040	3,370
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp	12.25	12.5	12.25	12.5	4,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc	0.75	0.78	0.74	0.76	13,120,000
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	10,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	545	545	530	530	28,100
Island Info And Tech Inc.	0.035	0.037	0.035	0.037	11,900,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	2,600,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.3	0.3	4,970,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co	0.28	0.32	0.26	0.26	2,650,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	422.5	427.5	420	422.5	271,530
Ivantage Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	100,000
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	4,500,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	6.4	6.6	6.4	6.6	94,000
Manila Electric Co. B	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.8	8,000
Petron Corp.	2.12	2.12	2.08	2.8	4,579,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.48	2.48	2.48	2.48	20,000
William.Gothong & Aboitiz	2.04	2.04	2.04	2.04	70,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.47	0.5	0.47	0.47	4,720,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.7	115,000
Sanitary Wares Mfg. Corp.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	100,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	70,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.46	2.46	2.46	2.46	4,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	10,300
Jollibee Foods Corp.	15.5	15.75	15.5	15.75	54,700
RFM Corp.	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	10,000
San Miguel Corp. A	54.5	55	54	55	"39,700"
San Miguel Corp. B	65.5	66	65.5	66	"22,300"
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.1	1,618,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026	3,200,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.06	2.06	2.06	2.06	10,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	90,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.245	0.28	0.245	0.27	27,850,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	40,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	100,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.2	0.21	0.19	0.19	800,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.22	0.2	0.215	3,800,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.08	1.1	1.08	1.1	400,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	8.2	8.2	8	8	822,000
Ionics Inc.	0.67	0.71	0.67	0.71	20,000
J.G. Summit Holdings, Inc.	1.42	1.42	1.42	1.42	40,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	560,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.18	0.185	0.175	0.175	410,000
Music Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.28	0.3	310,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.55	0.6	0.55	0.6	70,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.72	1.8	1.72	1.72	102,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	16.5	16.5	16.25	16.5	219,100
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.4	0.42	0.4	0.41	6,000,000
Mondragon Intl Phils, Inc	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	310,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.5	0.59	0.37	0.41	4,970,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10	10	10	10	1,000
Philweb Corp. - Warrants	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.002	5,000,000
WGA - Preferred	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	5,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.95	4.95	4.9	4.95	4,770,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.13	0.13	0.125	0.13	1,140,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	750,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.85	0.86	0.84	0.85	9,780,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.155	0.155	0.15	0.15	140,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	47,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	4.85	4.85	4.8	4.85	2,150,000
MINING					
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	1	1	1	1	100,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.19	0.195	0.19	0.195	310,000
Omico Corp.	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	5,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	200,000
OIL					
Interport Res. B	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	15,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	50,000,000
Pacifica	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	3,000,000

DISCLOSURES

CORRO Coat Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 9, 3 p.m. at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club. Stockholders of record as of May 12 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

INTERPHIL Laboratories Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 11, 3 p.m. at the Makati Sports Club. Stockholders of record as of April 25 are entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

F & J Prince Holdings Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 25, 3 p.m. at the Function Room 7 of Top of the Citi, Citibank Tower, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of May 31 are entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

FILIPINO Fund Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 20, 3 p.m. at the Camelia Room of Dusit Hotel Nikko, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of April 21 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

PHILEX Mining Corp. disclosed the designation of Manuel Zamora, an independent director, as member of the company's nominations committee.

* * *

MAKATI Finance Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 20, 10 a.m. at the Manila Polo Club, Makati City.

* * *

DIVERSIFIED Financial Network Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Aug. 28, 10 a.m. at the 3/F Hatchasia Global City, Taguig. Record date is July 15.

* * *

MARLO Cruz was designated compliance officer of PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.

* * *

LEPANTO Consolidated Mining Co. disclosed the appointment of Cielito Habito as member of the company's nomination committee.

* * *

CHINATRUST Commercial Bank Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 25, 2 p.m. at South Room A & B, 25/F, Tower One & Exchange Plaza, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of May 28 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

May 20, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.858074	1.000000	52.544000
Japan	Yen	0.007319	0.008530	0.448200
United Kingdom	Pound	1.401321	1.633100	85.809600
Hongkong	Dollar	0.110029	0.128228	6.737600
Switzerland	Franc	0.661227	0.770594	40.490100
Canada	Dollar	0.629733	0.733891	38.561600
Singapore	Dollar	0.496427	0.578536	30.398600
Australia	Dollar	0.562119	0.655093	34.421200
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.276241	2.652731	139.385100
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.228820	0.266667	14.011800
Brunei	Dollar	0.494996	0.576868	30.311000
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000102	0.000119	0.006300
Thailand	Baht	0.020440	0.023821	1.251700
UAE	Dirham	0.233643	0.272287	14.307000
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.165400	61.234800
Argentina	Peso	0.291367	0.339559	17.841800
Brazil	REAL	0.288720	0.336474	17.679700
Denmark	Kroner	0.134769	0.157060	8.252600
India	Rupee	0.018300	0.021327	1.120600
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.225839	0.263193	13.829200
Mexico	New Peso	0.082905	0.096618	5.076700
New Zealand	Dollar	0.501534	0.584488	30.711300
Norway	Kroner	0.125865	0.146683	7.707300
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014889	0.017352	0.911700
South Africa	Rand	0.108582	0.126541	6.649000
Korea	Won	0.000721	0.000840	0.044100
Sweden	Kroner	0.109122	0.127171	6.682100
Syria	Pound	0.020431	0.023810	1.251100
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024872	0.028986	1.523000
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000538	0.000627	0.032900

GLOBAL PRICE SLIDE

IMF warns of growing deflation menace in Asia

WASHINGTON—Deflationary pressures are growing in some areas, with Asia at most risk, but fears of a damaging global price slide are unwarranted, the International Monetary Fund said.

"The risk of an onset of deflation in a number of economies is seen to be relatively high and has drifted upward over the past several years," the IMF said.

"The risk occurs against a background of postwar low inflation rates, large output gaps, bursting of the equity price bubble, rising banking sector stresses in some economies and declining credit growth."

Deflation, or falling prices, deals a double blow to economies by encouraging people to postpone buying until prices fall further, and by raising real interest rates.

It is also very difficult to reverse, as Japan has learned.

The IMF's index of deflation vulnerability, drawn up by an IMF task force and approved by the fund's chief economist, Kenneth Rogoff, found pockets of higher deflation risk.

But the report, released at the weekend, also played down the global threat.

"It also did not see any compelling evidence of widespread international transmission of deflation. However, the high correlation of business cycles across countries creates a non-zero but still low probability of a simultaneous decline in prices."

Asian economies—Japan in particular but also Hong Kong and Taiwan—were at risk of worsening deflation, the fund said.

"Deflationary expectations appear to be entrenched and in Hong Kong, policy is constrained. In China, the strong pace of activity and policy stimulus already in the pipeline are likely to contain deflation."

The IMF has repeatedly prodded Japan to take sweeping action to reverse four years of deflation.

"In the euro area, inflation has been slow to decelerate and, except for Germany, risk of deflation remains low in the major countries," the IMF report said. *AFP*

Will Greenspan talk about deflation?

WASHINGTON—Two weeks after the Federal Reserve's dramatic warning about the risk of US deflation, Fed chief Alan Greenspan will get a chance to spell out the extent of the danger and offer his views on the still-tepid economic recovery.

Greenspan will testify on Wednesday before Congress' Joint Economic Committee in his first detailed remarks about the economy since an appearance on April 30 before the House Financial Services Committee.

His testimony, comes as Fed-fueled worries about deflation, or economy-wide price declines, have sent bond prices soaring, pushing yields to 45-year lows.

Stock prices have been on an upswing as well, although the market suffered a setback on Monday on worries about a weakening dollar.

"This is going to be a very interesting testimony, given the timing of it following the Fed's statement and the extremes we've seen in financial markets lately," said Brian Wesbury, chief economist at Griffin, Kubik, Stephens and Thomson Inc. in Chicago.

After May 6 policy meeting, the Fed left short-term US interest rates at 1961 lows but warned of a possible "unwelcome substantial fall in inflation."

Analysts interpreted that unprecedented statement to mean the Fed was worried about the potential for a self-reinforcing cycle of falling prices, such as that plaguing Japan's economy since the late 1990s.

Fed officials have called the risk slim although with the long-sought goal of price stability at hand, many say they must at least keep deflation on their radar screens.

The fears about soft prices gained traction last week after the Labor Department reported the underlying US inflation was running at an annual rate of just 1.5 percent in April, the weakest 12-month gain in 37 years.

Several analysts, however, have played down that report, pointing out that special factors such as the sharp retreat in oil prices in the aftermath of the Iraq war contributed to an easing of such prices as home utility costs.

"What we have seen is a continuing moderation in the rise of service prices," said former Fed Governor Lyle Gramley, who is now a senior economic adviser to Schwab Washington Research.

"I think the risk of outright deflation is fairly low." *Reuters*

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SEMINAR ROOM A
June 25, 2003 (Wednesday)
11.00 - 1.00 Environmental Scanning & Opportunity Evaluation by Dr. Aida Velasco-DLSU (Php 800/pax)
1:00 - 2:30 Venturing into the F&B Business by AIM (free)
2:30 - 3:00 Professionalizing SME's - AIM Way by AIM (free)
3:00 - 5:00 Values, Ethics & The Workplace by DLSU (free)
5:00 - 7:00 Technical Session by Omron (free)
June 26, 2003 (Thursday)
10:30 - 12:30 Sales! Sales! Connecting with your Client through Effective Sales Strategies for the F&B Industries by Terry Hockenhull - Charteris Consulting (free)
1:00 - 3:00 Technical Session by Enertech Systems Industries Inc. (free)
3:00 - 4:00 How to access Financing for your Business by Katrina Sanvictores - Export Bank (free)
4:00 - 5:00 E-commerce in the the Food & Beverage Industries by Romil Acosta - Bayantrade (free)
June 27, 2003 (Friday)
10:30 - 12:00 The Financial Plan by Ms. Emi Sarreal-DLSU (Php 800/pax)
1:00 - 3:00 Wine Appreciation Seminar by Mr. Roland Rotil (Rustan Wines & Spirits)
3:00 - 4:00 How to access Financing for your Business by Katrina Sanvictores - Export Bank (free)
4:00 - 5:00 Selling your F&B products to the Japanese Market by JETRO (free)
5:00 - 7:00 Venturing into the F&B Business by AIM (free)
June 28, 2003 (Saturday)
10:30 - 12:30 Total Quality Management in SME's by Mr. Bong Abad-DLSU (Php 800/pax)
2:00 - 3:00 Technical Session by Pneumatics Technologies (free)
4:00 - 6:00 Sales! Sales! Connecting with your Client through Effective Sales Strategies for the F&B Industries by Terry Hockenhull - Charteris Consulting (free)

SEMINAR ROOM B
June 25, 2003 (Wednesday)
11.00 - 12.00 Refrigerant Products Seminar by Mr. Dirk Boven - CIGI (free)
12:00 - 1:00 Cryogenic Freezing - MAP by Ms. Bernadette Abesamis & Mr. Nemensio Cambri - CIGI (free)
1:00 - 3:00 How To Start Your Own Business by Dr. Jiggs Mauricio-DLSU (Php 800/pax)
3:00 - 5:00 The Marketing Plan by DLSU (Php 800/pax)
5:00 - 7:00 Making Use Of Your Time / Time Management by DLSU (free)
June 26, 2003 (Thursday)
10:30 - 12:30 Organizing Your Business by DLSU (Php 800/pax)
1:30 - 4:30 Fondant Making: Quilting & Cake Designing by CCS Bakeshop(Php 800/pax)
4:30 - 6:30 The Operational Plan by Dr. Aida Velasco-DLSU (Php 800/pax)
June 27, 2003 (Friday)
10:30 - 12:30 Family And The Workplace by DLSU (free)
1:30 - 4:30 Blackout Cakes: Different Styles/Kinds of Chocolate Cakes by CCS Bakeshop (Php 800/pax)
4:30 - 6:30 Leadership Training by Mr. Raymund Habaradas-DLSU (Php 800/pax)
June 28, 2003 (Saturday)
10:30 - 12:30 Strategic Management For SME's by DLSU (Php 800/pax)
1:30 - 4:30 Porcelain Flower-Making: Tiny Flowers (Jasmine, santan, gumamela & a dozen of mini-roses in 10 mins. by CCS Bakeshop (Php 800/pax)

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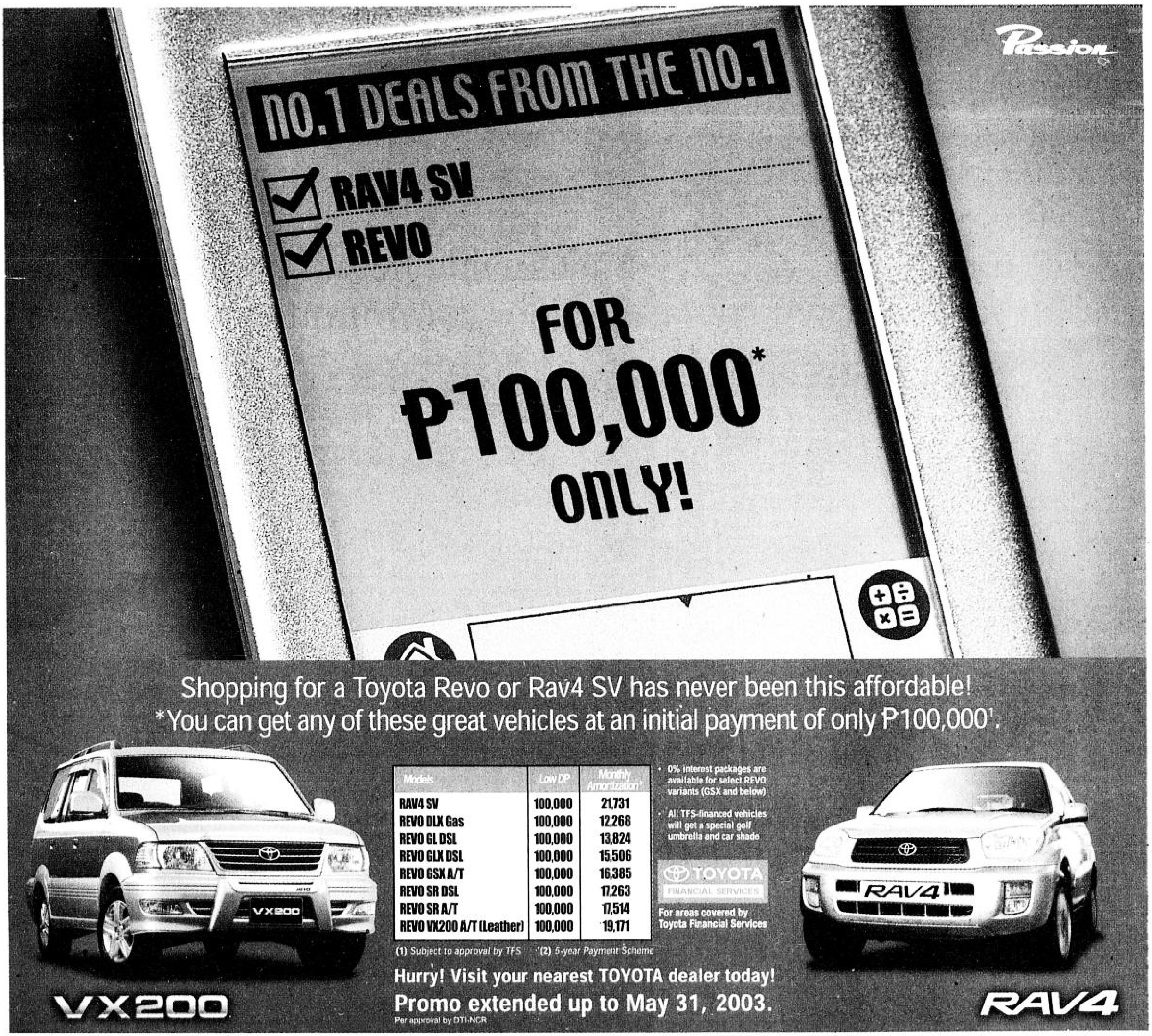

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People, Events & Products

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aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Aries Espinosa

SM Star Club 2003 finalists announced

ON SATURDAY, May 31, 12 cute, talented, and lovable kids will compete in the SM Star Club Grand Finals to be held at the Megastrip of the SM Megamall.

A project of the SM Supermalls in cooperation with Touch Mobile, the finals will culminate this year's grand mall-wide search for the best and brightest star kids. The contest has-in the past-proven to be a stepping stone for its winners, who have since shone in the modeling and showbiz fields.

Exciting prizes are at stake. The two grand prize winners will each take home P25,000 cash cards from Banco de Oro, P10,000 worth of gift certificates from Itti shoes, and an Encyclopedia Britannica set that includes Britannica CD on its Standard Edition, Reading Skills for Kids, Touch the Stars and Touch the Universe, the 2003 Almanac, and World Quiz.

Other prizes include a Storyland Birthday Package plus a 1-year Club Storyland membership, P10,000 worth of products and GCs from Garfield, P8,000 worth of toys from Toy Kingdom, P5,000 worth of products and GCs from Mr. Donut, P2,500 worth of GCs from Goldilocks, and P2,000 worth of GCs from Kameraworld.

The 12 finalists competing have spent a busy summer with lots of rehearsals, pictorials, and fashion shows. The pretty and talented girls include Rose Angela Marie Estanislao, Nicole Ann Reyes, Joanna Mae Morales, Coleen San Pedro, Gabriella Louie Lopez, and Maria Lourdes Morcillo. The cool and hip boys, on the other hand, include Kurt Isaiah Perez, Francis Angelo de Jesus, David Joshua Medina, Albert John Reyes, Jason Adriel Cuvinar, and Irann Amiel Jazier Balagtas.

Both Nicole Ann and Joanna May dream of becoming models. Both have traveled long distances to join the contest's modeling fun-rehearsals, fashion shows, and pictorials. Nicole Ann, 7, from Christ's Green's Pasture School, comes from Bulacan, while Joanna May, 7, who's in second grade at the St. Emelyn Academy, is from Imus, Cavite. Bith agree they've had a lot of fun and learned a lot about modeling by joining the contest.

Coleen and Gabriella Louie, on the other hand, have showbiz potentials. Coleen, 4, an incoming kinder pupil at the University of Santo Tomas, dreams of becoming another Carol Banawa. She sings, dances, acts, and has taken workshops at SM to hone these skills. High-spirited Gabriella Louie, meanwhile, likes to become an actress, and this early is always in front of the mirror acting the part.

Both Rose Angela Marie and Maria Lourdes have the makings of an artist. Rose, 6, a first grader at the St. Paul College of Paranaque is always surrounded by books and art materials and likes reciting poetry. Maria Lourdes, 5, from St. Alphonse Ligouri Integrated School, loves art and music, especially the songs of Regine Velasquez.

Not to be outdone, the boy finalists also have their sights set on modeling, Francis Angelo, 7, from St. John's Academy, is a darling in front of the camera, and dreams of becoming a commercial model. Apart from his excellent grades and gold medals, Albert John, 4, of the Growing Seed Child Development Center, says he "wants to be in print ads". Irann Amiel Jazier, 5, from the Jill Christian School, has given the contest his all-taking so much time to improve his moves, flash his biggest smile, and walk down the ramp during fashion shows.

Showbiz is definitely in the mind of David Joshua, 6, from the Colegio de San Agustin in Binan, Laguna. He's tops in academics, has won dancer of the year awards, and yes, dreams of becoming someone like Richard Gomez someday.

Kurt Isaiah and Jason Adriel, meanwhile, want to have it both. Kurt, 5, from the College of Immaculate Concepcion in Cabanatuan City, likes dancing, rapping, and declaiming, and is very excited about the piece he has prepared for the talent portion. Jason, 6, from Merry Toddlers School, loves both modeling and acting, and yes, would like to become a star one day.

THIS year's pretty, young and talented Star Club finalists Rose Angela Marie Estanislao, Nicole Ann Reyes, Joanna Mae Morales, Coleen San Pedro, Maria Lourdes Morcillo and Gabriella Louise Lopez.

DASHING and cool Star Club finalists Kurt Isaiah Perez, Albert John Reyes, Jason Adriel Cuvinar, Francis Angelo de Jesus, David Joshua Medina and Irann Amiel Jazier Balagtas.

ARMM SOCIAL FUND FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Request for Expression of Interest to Staff the Fund Management Office

The Government of the Philippines has availed a loan from the World Bank thru the ARMM Social Fund Project. The Project aims to improve the access of conflict affected barangays in ARMM to basic social services such as potable water, medicines, health clinics, and other rural and strategic infrastructures. It will also provide immediate employment for those involved in the implementation of the Project.

Based on a transparent and competitive process, the ARMM Social Fund is seeking competent candidates to staff the Central Fund Management Office located in Zamboanga City and two Area Offices located in Jolo, Sulu and Marawi City. The contractual engagement will start on or about June 16, 2003.

Interested candidates are requested to submit the following in the below address: 1) letter stating their interest in the position and providing a concise summary of the main reasons why candidate presumes to be qualified for the position, 2) detailed curriculum vitae, 3) copy of education degrees, and 4) employment/ professional references with contact information. These information must be received not later than May 27, 2003.

POSITION & PLACE OF ASSIGNMENT	SG	BASIC SALARY	NO.OF POSITION	QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE
1. Exec. Assistant III CFMO-Zamboanga City	20	P17,799.00	1	Bachelor's Degree; 3 years of relevant experience, To manage the agenda of and communication flows of the Executive Director; Coordinates with the Sub_project Approval Committee and other institutions
2. Management & Audit Analyst IV(Internal Auditor) – CFMO Zamboanga City	24	20, 823.00	1	Relevant Degree; 4 years in position/s involving management and supervision; Responsible for the internal auditing of the project financial management; Supervise works of internal auditors
3. Development Mgt Officer V (MIS & ME Head) CFMO- Zamboanga City	24	20,823.00	1	Relevant degree; 4 years in position/s involving management and supervision ; responsible for organizing and supervising , monitoring and evaluation (M&E), Management Information System (MIS) and information Dissemination
4. Accountant IV CFMO Zamboanga City	22	19,251.00	2	Bachelor's Degree in Commerce /Business Adm. Major in Accounting; 3 years of relevant experience; responsible for the handling of project's accounting system including support to Area Fund Mngt. Offices
5. Administrative Officer V CFMO Zamboanga City	24	20,823.00	1	Relevant Degree; 4 years of relevant experience involving management and supervsion; Responsible for the Project;s administration and day to day logistical support, including that of vehicles and travel logistics
6. Supply Officer IV-CFMO Zamboanga City	22	19,251.00	1	Bachelor's Degree; 3 years of relevant experience; responsible for the supply and logistics requirements of the Project
7. Records Officer III	18	15,841	1	Bachelor's Degree; 2 years of relevant experience; Responsible for the effective and efficient records management of the Project
8. Project Evaluation Officer IV (Information Dissemination Specialist) CFMO Zamboanga City	22	19,251	1	Bachelor's Degree; 3 years of relevant experience ; Responsible for the Project's information dissemination requirements with focus on the community level
9. Project Evaluation Officer IV(Staff Dev't Specialist)CFMO Zamboanga City	22	19251	1	Bachelors Degree; 3 years of relevant experience; Responsible for managing the Project's training activities for the FMO Staff and supporting the capacity building activities
10. Project Evaluation Officer 1V (Institutional Dev't Specialist	22	19,251	1	Bachelor's degree relevant to the job, 3 years relevant experience ; Responsible for the Project's institutional strengthening and governance component
11. Project Evaluation Officer IV (Livelihood Specialist) CFMO Zamboanga City	22	19,251	1	Bachelors Degree; 3 years of relevant experience ; Responsible for livelihood sub-component of the project , oversees relevant service providers implementing the activities of the sub component
12. Project Evaluation Officer (Procurement Specialist) CFMO- Zamboanga City	22	19,251	1	Bachelor's degree; 3 years relevant experience; Responsible for the procurement of goods, civil works, services of the project; Must be knowledgeable of WB Procurement Guidelines
13. Project Evaluation Officer IV (Environmental Specialist) CFMO- Zamboanga City	22	19,251	1	Bachelor's Degree relevant to the job; 3 years of relevant experience; Responsible for the Project environmental safeguards
14. Administrative Officer III – AFMO - Marawi City	18	15,841	1	Bachelor's Degree; 2 years of relevant experience, Responsible for the day to day Admin. Service functions to include property and supply management
15. Development Mngt. Officer III (MIS) AFMO – Marawi City	18	15,841	1	Bachelor's Degree, 2 years of relevant experience, Responsible for the Area FMO MIS requirement
16. Project Evaluation Officer III (M&E) AFMO-Jolo & Marawi City	18	15,841	2	Bachelor's Degree relevant to the job; 2 years of relevant experience, Responsible for the Area FMO MNE and requirements/activities
17. Project Development Officer III (Institutional Development Specialist) AFMO- Jolo and Marawi City	18	15,841	2	Bachelor's Degree relevant to the job; 2 years of relevant experience, Responsible for the institutional strengthening and capacity budgetary activities of Area FMO
18. Project Development Officer III (Livelihood Specialist) AFMO-Jolo and Marawi City	18	15,841	2	Bachelor's Degree relevant to the job, 2 years experience; Responsible for Area FMO livelihood sub component activities/ requirements
19. Project Development Officer III (Supervision Specialist) AFMO-Jolo and Marawi City	18	15,841	3	Bachelor's Degree relevant to the job; 2 years of relevant experience; Responsible for supporting the project/subproject supervision requirement
20. Project Development Officer III (Appraisal Specialist) - AFMO- Jolo & Marawi City	18	15,841	3	Bachelor's Degree relevant to the job; 2 years experience; Responsible for appraising the multi-sectoral sub-projects
21. Project Development Officer III (Community Development Specialist) AFMO – Jolo & Marawi City	18	15,841	2	Bachelor's Degree relevant to the job, 2 years of relevant experience; Responsible for Supporting Project Community development assistance component
22. Accountant III-AFMO-Jolo	18	15,841	1	Bachelor's degree in Commerce or Business Adm. Major in Accounting; 2 years relevant experience; Responsible for the AFMO's accounting functions
23. Cashier IV CFMO-Zamboanga City	22	19,251	1	Bachelor's Degree; 3 years of relevant experience; Responsible for handling cashier functions of the Project including field offices; computer literate

MR. NAZRULLAH B. MANZUR, Executive Director, ARMM Social Fund, 3rd Floor
VHW Building (Land Bank) Veterans Avenue, Zamboanga City 7000
Tel. # (062) 992-2684 to 86, Fax # (062) 991-9410

(PDI–May 21. 2003)

Sustainable health programs for poor communities

MEDICAL missions may do more harm than good, and sustainable health programs are a much better way to help poor communities. A training seminar featuring medical and rural health experts on this subject will be held by the League of Corporate Foundations on Friday, May 23, at the Petron MegaPlaza on Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City.

The seminar "Doing Good and Keeping People Well", the third in a series of LCF-led training seminars, will run from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and is open to all companies, organizations, and foundations interested in financially sustainable and effective community health programs.

Registration fee (to cover meals and lecture materials) is P1,500. Confirm your attendance by calling the LCF secretariat at 892-9084 or 892-9189.

Practical tips on the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), corporate and Department of Health partnerships on promoting community health, and other related topics will be discussed by noted medical and social development professionals. Speakers include UP-PGH director Dr. Juan Pablo Nanagas, on how NGOs can work effectively with hospitals and a study on the advantages and disadvantages of medical missions, Zuellig Foundation executive director Dr. Kenneth Y. Hartigan-Go for benchmarks of effective medical missions, director of the DOH-National Epidemiology Center Dr. Consorcia Lim-Quizon for updates on the SARS epidemic, Dr. Dennis Batangan of the Ateneo de Manila University's Institute of Philippine Culture on how a community health care program can best promote a healthy society, Dr. Marife Yap of the Ateneo Graduate School of Business, on changing the model of community health investment through the Leaders for Health Project, and Give-A-Life Foundation's Dr. Philip Cruz for communicating health messages to society, using media to properly push health programs and getting donors to work for our cause.

Clips

PMA Centennial Convention

DR. GIL Fernandez, president of the Philippine Medical Association (PMA) through the overall chair Dr. Modesto Llamas, enjoins the members to attend the PMA Centennial Convention from May 21 to 24 at the Manila Hotel. The theme of the convention is "100 Years of the PMA in Nation Building". Highlights of the program are: May 21, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., registration and welcome reception in the evening; May 22, 8 a.m., opening ceremonies with Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr. as keynote speaker, 2 p.m. awarding ceremonies, 6 p.m. Flower Festival and Fellowship Night. Plenary speakers are Drs. Josefina Carlos, Nadim Al-Mubarak and Corazon Lim. The Jose P. Rizal Memorial Lecture will be on May 24 at 8 a.m. with Dr. Antonio Gisbert as speaker. Former Senator Raul Roco is the speaker and inducting officer during the closing ceremonies on May 24.

Finex seminar on financing

THE FINANCIAL Executives Institute of the Philippines (Finex), in cooperation with SB Corp. and Plantersbank, will conduct a seminar titled "Financing for SMEs" on May 22, 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the RCBC Plaza, Makati City. The program is designed for entrepreneurs, multi-tasked SME managers, financial executives, consultants, franchise owners, bank credit officers and students. The one-day seminar will enable the participants to gain a keen understanding on how to properly access financial resources from government and private sources for use in their business operations. The participants would be able to learn how to utilize the innate strengths and avoid the weaknesses of SME borrower-entrepreneurs in managing their business. For inquiries and reservations, call Finex or Analyn at 811-4052, 811-4188.

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Shown is a Hyundai Starex fitted with a Thule Evolution roof box. For inquiries about how to discover your world with Thule, visit the Thule/EGR showroom at Equitable Bank Building, Ortigas Avenue, Greenhills, San Juan or call 744-6367.

PHILAM PLANS

Credibility speaks for itself

By Marlet D. Salazar

PHILAM Plans—the name alone spells credibility. The company's track record is undoubtedly impressive. These are just few of the reasons Philam Plans has gone a very remarkable journey to hit the highest point of success in the business.

Miguel de Leon

Rosario Andrada

Grace Remo

Estela Hilario

Lawrence Ycaro

> The awardees are living testaments that Philam Plans' sales associates are the best rewarded in the industry. They are considered the company's best treasured assets. As proof is Philam Plans' benefits and compensation package which is probably the best in the business.

And with all the blessings Philam Plans receives, everyone in the company are sure to have their share.

Philam Plans' Lakbayan 2002 surely brings out the best in its team, and their contribution to the company will never go unnoticed. Tonight, their efforts will be recognized in its annual awards and sales convention which will be held at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel.

The awardees are living testaments that Philam Plans' sales associates are the most rewarded in the industry. They are considered the company's best treasured assets. As proof is Philam Plans' benefits and compensation package which is probably the best in the business.

We introduce you to five of them...

Estela Hilario, agency manager of E.C. Hilario & Associates; Grace Remo, agency manager of Remo & Associates; Rosalyn and Miguel de Leon, unit manager and sales counselor of Z.B. Dela Cruz & Associates; Lawrence Ycaro, sales counselor of FB Bautista & Associates; and Rosario Andrada, district manager of Benetua & Associates are some of this year's awardees in Philam Plans' Annual Awards program.

Dreams do come true

The Annual Awards celebration is a much-awaited annual treat for the company's top sales producers. Through this program, also called Lakbayan, the company's sales force have had the chance to avail of a fully paid vacation in various tourist spots in the country. This is just one of the many rewards Philam Plans gives for their hard work and the important role they play in the company.

The celebration is just one of the sources of motivation for the company's sales force. Estela Hilario admits it reminds her to give her best always. Hilario joined Philam Plans in 1989. She worked her way up from being a unit manager and in 1995 she was promoted as agency manager of the Manila South 1 region.

She is a "perennial" Lakbayan awardee and Globetrotter qualifier, having earned fully paid vacations abroad through her excellent sales production. This year, she is just a few steps away from getting the highest honor. She is also a Life Member of the President's Honor Club, an exclusive club for those with exceedingly high production.

Hilario is joined by other top producers who are just now discovering the benefits of being a Philam Plans sales associate. As the De Leon couple said, "We are just getting started." Theirs is another budding success story worthy of sharing.

Rosalyn decided to work full time as a Philam Plans sales counselor in 2000. After a year, she was promoted to unit manager position. With the steady inflow of commissions from her sales and her outstanding deals, Rosalyn was able to convince her husband Miguel to join her.

The couple says they were able to send all their three kids to school from what they tagged as the "unlimited" income from Philam Plans. This year, Miguel is No. 1 Sales Counselor for the Rookie Awards and No. 2 SC for the Top Awards.

Rosario Andrada attributed her personal as well as professional development to her vast work experience and tireless dealing with people. "I didn't realize that I can convince people," she said. "It was a surprise even to me that I'm able to do what I do." Andrada transferred to Philam Plans from another company and immediately achieved the position of district manager. Andrada gets the No. 3 District Manager Top Award.

Everyone in the company has their own success stories, and each is extraordinary in their own way. A new member of the Philam Plans sales force, 38-year-old Lawrence Ycaro couldn't be happier. Only on his first year, he is already an awardee. In fact, Lawrence is the No. 1 Sales Counselor in the Top Awards category.

Lawrence, however, has another reason to be pleased with his newfound career. For him, his family is his top priority and quality time with them cannot be sacrificed. With his job at Philam Plans, Lawrence says, "I spend more time with my wife as she often accompanies me to my presentations."

Another family-oriented person, agency manager Grace Remo used to be a plain housewife before she was thrust into the colorful world of sales in 1995. Remo commends the compensation she and her family enjoy at Philam Plans. "I'm able to provide my family now with whatever they want," she said. She is joined by husband Adolfo Remo in her agency. Both are No. 1 awardees as agency manager and district manager in the Rookie Awards.

Despite their relative successes, however, everyone admits they are not immune to trials. They agree however that these are challenges that motivate them to do even better. And with the support and guidance the company extends, there are just so many reasons for them to keep going. The compensation provided by the company is undeniably enticing, but another factor that counts most is the familial fondness each develops in the workplace.

Attractive benefits

Who wouldn't be lured to become a sales associate when the company knows how to take care of its prized assets? Sales associates receive free group term insurance, free accident and health coverage with medical reimbursement and free hospital income plan. The company is also the only one to offer its sales force an accident and health coverage, a group medical/health insurance program that answers for any hospitalization or medical expenses incurred from accident and disability.

At Philam Plans dreams do come true. A sales associate can avail of a car and housing loan. This alone motivates people to work harder. Add to these are business equipment loan facilities meant to equip a sales associate with their needs in the business.

The Starr Foundation Scholarship Program is another popular feature of the agency benefits package. As part of the American International Group (AIG), Philam Plans' international parent, sales associates who have kids below 23 years old can qualify for the scholarship grant as long as they meet the requirements.

Of course, the Lakbayan and Globetrotters programs motivate the people to do even better every year. Who will not aim for a place in the company's Globetrotters program, which brings Philam Plans' top sales producers to various destinations abroad? Just a few of the places they have visited are Australia, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, China, Canada and Spain.

Philam Plans emerged as the No. 1 pre-need company based on total value of new sales for the year 2002. It is also the five-year leader in the pension plan market. It is an affiliate of the Philippine American Life and General Insurance Co., the No. 1 insurance company in the country, and a member of the American International Group, the world's leading international insurance and financial services organization, with operations in approximately 130 countries and jurisdictions.

OUR BEST JUST

Presenting the 2002 PHILAM

TOP AWARDS
Top 10 Agency Managers

Francisco B. Bautista
FB Bautista & Associates

Samuel C. Tan
Tan & Associates

Amelia S. Yap
Nickel Agency

Elizabeth T. Mercado
Mercado & Associates

Carolina B. Bautista
CB Bautista & Associates

Remando E. Arcibal
Arcibal & Associates

Janet L. Ramos
China Agency

Estela C. Hilario
Hilario & Associates

Allan G. Tuazon
Tuazon & Associates

Rolando C. Liwag
Liwag & Associates

Top 20 Sales Counselors

Adriana C. Tan
Tan & Associates

Arnolfo A. Pinero Jr.
WA Pinero & Associates

Ninfa E. Aladano
Flores & Associates

Mary Ann Rachelle M. Saquing
RM Square & Associates

Margie G. Rivera
Enriquez & Associates

Lawrence Joseph Y. Ycaro
FB Bautista & Associates

Miguel G. de Leon
Dela Cruz & Associates

Thomas C. Lau
Tan & Associates

Jocelyn N. Tan
Tan & Associates

Mhaila C. Andaya
Enriquez & Associates

ROOKIE AWARDS
Top 5 Agency Managers

Jerome D. Hernandez
Liwag & Associates

Johnny L. Chieng
Benetua & Associates

Laddie Riz C. Borreo
Borreo & Associates

Lorna R. Cruz
Nava & Associates

Chona C. Santos
Bello & Associates

Grace M. Remo
Remo & Associates

Mely S. Jamandre
MS Jamandre & Associates

Nenita G. Ramos
GF Ramos & Associates

Dorotea D. Ventura
D Ventura & Associates

Allin Grace O. Dimacuha
AO Dimacuha & Associates

Top 10 Sales Counselors

Miguel G. de Leon
Dela Cruz & Associates

Thomas C. Lau
Tan & Associates

Mhaila C. Andaya
Enriquez & Associates

Carmina O. Ty
Mercado & Associates

Randy A. Alagon
Mercado & Associates

Michael L. De los Santos
Mercado & Associates

Ma. Precious S. Alagon
Mercado & Associates

Evelyn H. Africa
Liwag & Associates

Jesus A. Sicat
Dy & Associates

Gemma Miranda
WA Pinero & Associates

Top 3 Sales Counselors

Leonardo P. Samson Jr.
Pinzon & Associates

Edna P. Mahinay
Villas & Associates

Gloria Z. Victoria
Naoe & Associates

SA/GB AWARDEES
Agency Managers

Remando E. Arcibal
Arcibal & Associates

Amelia S. Yap
Nickel Agency

Sales Counselor

Vincent Chincuanco
Macatangay & Associates

PRESIDENT'S HONOR CLUB

Associate Members

1. Elizabeth T. Mercado
2. Amelia S. Yap
3. Allan G. Tuazon
4. Victoria M. Crizaldo
5. Jose D. Ramirez
6. Jannet E. Dulay
7. Eric T. Bautista
8. Ninfa E. Aladano
9. Valentina C. Monte de Ramos
10. Mary Ann Rachelle M. Saquing
11. Myrna P. Rosales
12. Jesusa C. Juan
13. Ma. Socorro R. Opena

Life Members

1. Francisco B. Bautista
2. Carolina B. Bautista
3. Estela C. Hilario
4. Melania L. Tizon
5. Alma C. Clariño
6. Danilo L. Mercado

Senior Member

Remando E. Arcibal

CHAIRMAN'S COUNCIL MEMBERS

Agency Managers

1. Allan G. Tuazon
2. Francisco B. Bautista

District Managers

1. Gloria Tuazon
2. Alma C. Clariño

GOT BETTER

PLANS Top Awardees

Top 5 District Managers

Violeta M. Ocampo
FB Bautista & Associates

Alma C. Clariño
Clariño & Associates

Rosario P. Andrada
Benetua & Associates

Jannet E. Dulay
Dulay & Associates

Eric T. Bautista
FB Bautista & Associates

Top 10 Unit Managers

Danilo L. Mercado
Mercado & Associates

Julieta D. Sabanal
Nickel Agency

Jose K. Tiu
Tan & Associates

Marcelino Luisito F. Ocampo
FB Bautista & Associates

Valentina C. Monte
De Ramos
China Agency

Bruce Patrick U. Pineda
Crown Agency

Carmina O. Ty
Mercado & Associates

Randy A. Alagon
Mercado & Associates

Michael L. De los Santos
Mercado & Associates

Roland Ramos
China Agency

Ma. Precious S. Alagon
Mercado & Associates

Evelyn H. Africa
Liwag & Associates

Jesus A. Sicat
Dy & Associates

Marie Paulit T. Estella
Magellan Agency

Gemma Miranda
WA Pinero & Associates

Top 5 District Managers

Adolfo C. Remo
GM Remo & Associates

Maria Flor B. Rodriguez
Hilario & Associates

Maria Virginia M. Goloy
Dela Cruz & Associates

Ellen V. Bunag
Dulay & Associates

Norma D. Ampon
CB Bautista & Associates

Top 5 Unit Managers

Valentina C. Monte
De Ramos
China Agency

Rosalyn A. de Leon
Dela Cruz & Associates

Myrna M. Jacobo
RM Square & Associates

Rodrigo J. Martin
Dela Cruz & Associates

Rommel Voltaire C.
Quizon
Macatangay & Associates

NATIONAL QUALITY AWARDS

Top 3 Agency Managers

Iris M. Fernandez
Fernandez & Associates

Grace M. Remo
GM Remo & Associates

Mely S. Jamandre
MS Jamandre & Associates

Top 3 District Managers

Delfina T. Tigno
Fernandez & Associates

Robert Francis K. Rabago
Dy & Associates

Alvin Z. Adlova
Adlova & Associates

Top 3 Unit Managers

Felipe V. dela Fuente
Dela Fuente & Associates

Wilmar L. Toledo
Toledo & Associates

Adelaida F. dela Cruz
Arbis & Associates

We are proud to have more Awardees than ever before! These are the men and women, who, through their vision and determination, have brought us forward. Across the country, from all walks of life, these Philam Plans achievers have secured the future for their planholders and their families.

In the process, they have set new records and overcome all obstacles. They are the best of the best! We honor them and are proud to call them our very own.

PHILAM PLANS
One with the Filipino Family.

PENSION PLAN • EDUCATION PLAN • LIFE PLAN

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The Philippine American Life and General Insurance Company, Philam Savings Bank, Inc., Philam Plans, Inc., Philam Care Health Systems, Inc., Philam Properties Corporation, Philam Asset Management, Inc., Philam Systems, Inc., Philam Insurance Company, Inc., AIG Credited Card Company Philippines, Inc.

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G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4	GB1 GREENBELT 1	GB3 GREENBELT 3	ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER
1 WALANG KAPALIT	1 HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS	ArtFilm 1 THE MATRIX RELOADED 12:30, 3:20, 6:10, 9:00	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 1 HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS 1:50 2:15 4:40 9:40	THX 1 THE MATRIX RELOADED
2 THE MATRIX RELOADED	2 X-MEN 2	2 AUTO FOCUS (Exclusive) 12:45, 3:00, 5:15, 7:30	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 2 THE MATRIX RELOADED 2:05 5:00 7:55 10:50	2 HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
3 HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 3 THE MATRIX RELOADED 1:20 4:10 7:00 9:50	VIVA ACOUSTIC NIGHT FEAT. PAOLO SANTOS May 23 & 24	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 THE HOURS 12:40 2:50 5:00, 7:10 9:20 11:20	3 THE MATRIX RELOADED
4 THE MATRIX RELOADED	4 THE MATRIX RELOADED / BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 THE MATRIX RELOADED 2:40 5:35 8:30 11:25	4 RING 0
	5 SO CLOSE		GUARANTEED SEATS THE MATRIX RELOADED 12:20 3:15 HOW TO LOSE A GUY	5 SO CLOSE
	THE MATRIX RELOADED			
	7 RING 0			

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2	SO CLOSE
3	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4 GOLD	THE MATRIX RELOADED
5 GOLD (DOLBY EX)	X- MEN-2
6 GOLD	THE MATRIX RELOADED
7 GOLD	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
8	TILL THERE WAS YOU
9	WALANG KAPALIT
10	ANGEL SA LUPA

Pearl Plaza Cinemas

(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1	RESERVE
2	RESERVE
3	RESERVE
4	RESERVE
5	RESERVE
6	RESERVE
Golden Pearl THX	RESERVE

Masagana CINEMA 1 2 & 3

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1	DAYO
2	THE MATRIX RELOADED
3	HIRAM

starmall Movies

www.clickthecity.com.ph

(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986

1	WALANG KAPALIT
2	DAYO
3	KIKAY
4 DOLBY DIGITAL EX	THE MATRIX RELOADED
5	HIRAM

METROPOLIS star

www.clickthecity.com.ph

(Alabang) tel 850.4285

1	KIKAY
2	DAYO
3	HIRAM
4	SO CLOSE
5	THE MATRIX RELOADED
6	THE MATRIX RELOADED

M star

www.clickthecity.com.ph

(Las Pinas) tel 873.5004

1	WALANG KAPALIT
2	

PREMIERE CINEMA THX

(Makati City) TEL. 8934225, 8922503

THE MATRIX RELOADED

Center Plaza Cinema

(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	TILL THERE WAS YOU
2	X- MEN-2

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL IN.

tel 930.9515

1	
2	HIRAM
3	

Sunshine

(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	HIRAM
3	DAYO
4	

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City

(Manila) tel 734.8588

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4	HIRAM
5	DAYO
6	ANGEL SA LUPA
7	THE MATRIX RELOADED
8	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
9	SO CLOSE

Gotesco Caloocan

tel 362.3508

2	RESERVE

Gotesco Grand Central

(Caloocan) tel 365.7928

1	ANGEL SA LUPA
2	WALANG KAPALIT
3	HIRAM
4	THE MATRIX RELOADED
5	DAYO
6 (DOLBY)	SO CLOSE
7 (DTS)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
8	TILL THERE WAS YOU
9	KIKAY

Gotesco Commonwealth

tel 951.0082

1	WALANG KAPALIT
2 (SDDS)	SO CLOSE
3 (DTS)	ANGEL SA LUPA
4 (DOLBY)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
5	HIRAM

Gotesco Ortigas

tel 656.6795

1	WALANG KAPALIT
2	DAYO
3 (DTS)	ANGEL SA LUPA
4	HIRAM
5 (SDDS)	THE MATRIX RELOADED

Universal

(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	HIRAM

Sampaguita

(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	DAYO

Dilson

(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson	HIRAM
Lords	XEREX
Jennet	RESERVE

MARIKINA PALACE

Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	SO CLOSE
2	THE MATRIX RELOADED
3	DAYO
4	HIRAM

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto SUPER CINERAMA

tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	HIRAM
3	ANGEL SA LUPA
4	WALANG KAPALIT
5	DAYO

FRC Cinema

(Talaba Bacoor Cavite)

1	
2	

Berma Cinema

(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	HIRAM

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT Araneta

MALL CINEPLEX 7

tel 911.3101 loc. 821.8242.8400

1	ANGEL SA LUPA
2	DAYO
3	SO CLOSE
4	THE MATRIX RELOADED
5 (DTS)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
6	WALANG KAPALIT
7	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS

FarmersPlaza CINEMAS

tel 911.3101 loc. 821.8242.8400

1	MATRIX
2	HIRAM

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall

(Sta. Rosa Laguna) TEL. (049) 837-0026

1	HIRAM
2	WALANG KAPALIT
3 (DTS)	THE MATRIX RELOADED

Cinema 2000 Waltermart

(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7303

1	THE HOURS
2 (DTS)	WALANG KAPALIT
3 (DOLBY)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall

(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	THE HOURS
2	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
3	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4	ANGEL SA LUPA

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix

(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	WALANG KAPALIT
2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 (DOLBY)	X- MEN -2
4	

Cinema 2000 MetroTown

(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729

1	WALANG KAPALIT
2	NATIONAL SECURITY
3 (DOLBY)	A MAN APART
4	THE MATRIX RELOADED

Magic Star Cinema

(Tarlac City) tel (045) 611.4305

1 (DOLBY)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	A MAN APART
3	WALANG KAPALIT

Lianas Cinema

(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR
2	HIRAM
3	DAYO
4	THE MATRIX RELOADED

Lianas MovieCity

(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
2	WALANG KAPALIT
3 (DTS)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4	HIRAM
5	BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR

Olivarez Tri-Cinema

(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	WALANG KAPALIT
3	HIRAM

Olivarez Los Baños

tel (049) 249.2558

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
3	HIRAM

Mega Center Mall

(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

1	NATIONAL SECURITY
2	KANGAROO JACK
3 (DTS)	WALANG KAPALIT
4	THE MATRIX RELOADED

Cabuyao

(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	
2	

Emperor

(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	KIKAY
2	WALANG KAPALIT
3	RESERVE

Fiesta World Mall

(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	WALANG KAPALIT
2	PHONE BOOTH
3	ANGER MANAGEMENT
4	THE MATRIX RELOADED

Jade Cinema

(Angeles City) tel (045)887-5001 TO 03

1	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
2	WALANG KAPALIT
3	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE

Cine Nepo Mall

(Angeles City) te (045) 887-0121

1	WALANG KAPALIT
2	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
3 (DOLBY)	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
4	THE MATRIX RELOADED

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NOW SHOWING

SM CITY BACOOR

4173888

1	DAYO
2	ANGHEL SA LUPA
3	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4	HOW TO LOSE A GUY ...
5	THE MATRIX RELOADED
6	WALANG KAPALIT
7	HIRAM
8	X-MEN 2

SM CENTERPOINT

7149522 -7161416

1	WALANG KAPALIT
2	SO CLOSE
3	HOW TO LOSE A GUY ...
4	DAYO
5	THE MATRIX RELOADED
6	HIRAM
7	RING 0
8	ANGHEL SA LUPA
9	THE MATRIX RELOADED
10	THE MATRIX RELOADED

SM CITY FAIRVIEW

9350749

1	ANGHEL SA LUPA
2	SO CLOSE
3	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4	THE MATRIX RELOADED
5	X-MEN 2
6	WALANG KAPALIT
7	THE MATRIX RELOADED
8	HOW TO LOSE A GUY...
9	TILL THERE WAS YOU
10	HIRAM
11	RING 0
12	DAYO

SM CITY MANILA

5239240

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	HOW TO LOSE A GUY...
3	RING 0
4	THE MATRIX RELOADED
5	SO CLOSE
6	THE MATRIX RELOADED
7	HIRAM
8	DAYO
9	WALANG KAPALIT
10	TILL THERE WAS YOU
11	X-MEN 2
12	ANGHEL SA LUPA

SM MEGAMALL

6331901 • 6329401

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	X-MEN 2
3	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4	HOW TO LOSE A GUY...
5	RING 0
6	SO CLOSE
7	DAYO
8	TILL THERE WAS YOU
9	WALANG KAPALIT
10	THE MATRIX RELOADED
11	HIRAM
12	ANGHEL SA LUPA

SM CITY NORTH EDSA

9295452

1	WALANG KAPALIT
2	RING 0
3	HIRAM
4	ANGHEL SA LUPA
5	DAYO
6	SO CLOSE
7	HOW TO LOSE A GUY...
8	THE MATRIX RELOADED

SM SOUTHMALL

8066888

1	HOW TO LOSE A GUY...
2	THE MATRIX RELOADED
3	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4	RING 0
5	WALANG KAPALIT
6	THE MATRIX RELOADED
7	ANGHEL SA LUPA
8	SO CLOSE
9	DAYO
10	HIRAM

SM CITY CEBU

2313876

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	HOW TO LOSE A GUY ...
3	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
4	PINOCCHIO
5	SOULKEEPER
6	PUNLA
7	WALANG KAPALIT
8	THE MATRIX RELOADED

SM CITY ILOILO

3209422

1	WISHMASTER 4
2	CLOSED
3	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4	WALANG KAPALIT
5	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
6	THE MATRIX RELOADED
7	CLOSED
8	AMAZON

SM CITY PAMPANGA

7128015

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	THE MATRIX RELOADED
3	HOW TO LOSE A GUY...
4	DAYO
5	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
6	WALANG KAPALIT

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT

8294975

1	DAYO
2	HOW TO LOSE A GUY ...
3	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4	THE MATRIX RELOADED

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN

2514302

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	WALANG KAPALIT
3	HIRAM
4	DAYO

SM CITY DAVAO

2976998

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	AMAZON
3	WALANG KAPALIT
4	SOULKEEPER
5	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
6	THE MATRIX RELOADED

SM BICUTAN

776-3055

1	HOW TO LOSE A GUY...
2	THE MATRIX RELOADED
3	DAYO
4	THE MATRIX RELOADED

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

859-2884

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	JAILBIRDS
3	WALANG KAPALIT
4	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE

THE PODIUM CINEMA

18 ADB Avenue Ortigas Center Mandaluyong City

633-8076

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED 11:00 MF/1:35 LMF/ 4:00 END HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS 4:15 MF/6:30/8:45/ 10:40 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:55 END
2	THE MATRIX RELOADED 11:10 FS/11:40 MF/2:30/5:20/8:10/ 10:35 LFS/11:00 LMF/1:25 END

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THX	MATRIX RELOADED 12:30, 3:20, 6:10, 9:00 LMF
2	MATRIX RELOADED
3	MATRIX RELOADED
4	SO CLOSE
5	HOW TO LOOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
6	RING - 0
7	WALANG KAPALIT
8	ANGEL SA LUPA
9	BRINGGING DOWN THE HOUSE
10	X-MEN 2

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NOTICE is hereby given that the estate of the late ELIZABETH C. COBB has been extra-judicially settled on May 5, 2003, Under Doc. No. 48; Page No. 11; Book No. XV; Series of 2003, before Notary Public FELIPE L. ZULUETA of Paranaque.
(PDI-May 7, 14 & 21, 2003)

Notice is hereby given that affidavit of Self Adjudication of estate of late Angelina F. Comsti w/waiver of share has settled as per Doc. No. 217, Page No. 44, Book No. LII, Series of 2003 before Notary Public Atty. El Cid C. Fajardo in Pasig City (PDI-May 21, 28, June 4, 2003)

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Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Gregorio D. Diaz & Purificacion Trinidad-Diaz has been extrajudicially settled with assignment of rights among his heirs before Notary Public, Atty. Jaime S. De Guzman as per Doc. No. 480; Page No. 96; Book No. 207; Series of 2003.
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002	Foreclosed 200 sqm. lot with unfinished structure	Barangay Palag Cagayan de Oro City	PhP465,000.00
03-09	7 industrial lots 9,658 to 10,811 sqm. With TCTs	San Jose Del Monte Bulacan	PhP800.00/sqm.

Payment schemes for the abovecited properties are ***cash, modified cash*** (6 equal installments without interest) and ***installment*** for a maximum period of ***ten (10) years*** with graduated interest rates.

Bidding Materials can be secured for a non-refundable fee of ***PhP200.00*** from the ***Commercial/Industrial Bids & Awards Committee (COINBAC) c/o the Commercial & Industrial Estates Department (CIED)***, Mezzanine Floor, NHA Main Building, Elliptical Road, Quezon City and the Cagayan de Oro Project Office located at Don Julio Pacana Street, Macabalan Puntod, Cagayan de Oro. For inquiry, please call ***Ms. Evelyn V. Ramos, Manager, Sales Div., CIED*** or ***Ms. Neri A. Subido*** at the following Tel. Nos. ***CIED: (02) 923-0390, (02) 928-4561 local 302 & 303.***

SCHEDULE	Cagayan de Oro	Sapang Palay
A. Submission of Pre-Qualification	May 19 to May 27, '03 office hours NHA-Project Office Compound	May 19 to 04 June, '03 Office Hours CIED, Mezzanine Floor NHA Main Bldg. Elliptical Road, Q.C.
B. Pre-Bid conference	27 May '03, 2:30 p.m. NHA-CDO P.O. Compound	04 June '03, 10:00 a.m. Operations Center 3rd Floor, NHA Main Bldg.
C. Submission of Sealed Bids	29 May '03, 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. NHA-CDO P.O. Compound	06 June '03, 9:00 a.m. to 12nn Operations Center
D. Opening of Sealed Bids	29 May '03, 10:30 a.m. NHA-CDO P.O. Compound	06 June '03, 1:30 p.m. Operations Center

The Authority reserves the right to ***reject*** any or all offers or any part thereof or to ***waive*** any required formalities and ***accept*** offers most advantageous to the interest of NHA.

(Sgd.) **JOSEPH PETER S. SISON**
Assistant General Manager/Chairman COINBAC

(PDI - May 17 & 21, 2003)

DEPARTMENT OF
TRADE & INDUSTRY
PHILIPPINES

NOTICE OF INITIATION OF INVESTIGATION ON THE APPLICATION FOR THE IMPOSITION OF SAFEGUARD MEASURES AGAINST IMPORTATION OF FLOAT GLASS

(SGM CASE NO. 03-2003)

ON 24 APRIL 2003, DTI OFFICIALLY RECEIVED A PROPERLY DOCUMENTED APPLICATION FROM ASAHI GLASS PHILIPPINES FOR THE INITIATION OF A SAFEGUARD MEASURES INVESTIGATION AGAINST THE IMPORTATION OF FLOAT GLASS. THE PROTEST ALLEGED THAT THE INCREASED IMPORTS HAVE CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE SERIOUS INJURY SUFFERED BY THE LOCAL INDUSTRY.

THE DTI ACTING UNDER SECTION 6 OF RA 8800, THE SAFEGUARD MEASURES ACT, HAS MADE AN EVALUATION OF THE PROTEST AND FOUND REASONABLE GROUNDS TO INITIATE A SAFEGUARD MEASURES INVESTIGATION ON FLOAT GLASS FROM VARIOUS COUNTRIES. THE PERIOD OF INVESTIGATION IS FOR THE LAST FIVE (5) YEARS i.e. 1997 TO 2002 WITH THE PERIOD OF OBSERVED SURGE IN IMPORTS FROM 1998 - 2002.

THE COMMENCEMENT DATE FOR THE INVESTIGATION IS THE DAY ON WHICH THIS NOTICE OF INITIATION IS PUBLISHED IN TWO (2) NEWSPAPERS OF GENERAL CIRCULATION.

WHEREFORE, IN VIEW THEREOF, ANY INTERESTED PARTIES WHO MAY WISH TO SUBMIT THEIR COMMENTS AND POSITION ON THE PROTEST FILED BY ASAHI GLASS PHILIPPINES AGAINST THE IMPORTATION OF FLOAT GLASS ARE REQUESTED TO DIRECT THEIR REPRESENTATION TO THE BUREAU OF IMPORT SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY, 3RD FLOOR, OPPEN BUILDING, #349 SEN. GIL. PUYAT AVENUE, MAKATI CITY, WITHIN FIVE (5) DAYS FROM DATE OF PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.

30 April 2003.

MAR ROXAS
Secretary

(PDI--May 21, 2003)

Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City 1100
Tel. Nos. (632) 929-6626 to 29 • (632) 929-6552
929-6620 • 929-6663 to 35
929-7041 to 43
PHILIPPINES

LOAN NO. 1665

METRO MANILA AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Expression of Interest

The Republic of the Philippines has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), toward the cost of the Metro Manila Air Quality Improvement Sector Development Program (Investment Loan/1665 PHI). The overall objective of the Program is to improve air quality management in the Metro Manila air shed. Pursuant to Section 9 of RA 8749, a Governing Board (GB) shall be created for the Metro Manila airshed to oversee the formulation and implementation of an action plan to control air pollution in the area. The Governing Board shall be provided with technical secretariat supported by the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) as well as a small group of technical experts. The Program provides support to the GB by funding the Technical Secretariat (TS) for two (2) years.

The objectives of the Technical Secretariat of the GB are: i) to develop strategies, policies and action plans and programs on air quality management; ii) to assist in the establishment and operationalization of the air quality fund (AQF); iii) to assist in the institutional development and capacity building for various stakeholders in various aspects of air quality management (e.g., air quality monitoring, air pollution control technologies and fuel quality, use of alternative and renewable sources of energy and compliance to rules and regulations) through the development of manuals, training and IEC; and, iv) other services that the GB may require.

Consulting Services

The following shall be selected through a consulting firm in accordance with the ADB's Guidelines on the Use of Consultants.

1. International Consultant: Team Leader
2. Fund Management Specialist
3. Institutional Development and Capacity Building Specialist
4. Air Quality Monitoring Specialist
5. Public Awareness Specialist
6. Legal Consultant
7. Air Pollution Control Technologist

The Consulting firms should contact the Department of Environment and Natural Resources at the address below for more detailed description of the service required.

Interested parties may secure Pre-qualification documents from the BAC-FAPs Secretariat c/o Ms. Ma. Lourdes G. Ferrer, Foreign Assisted and Special Programs Office, DENR Compound, Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City with telephone nos. **928-0970 / 928-0028 / 926-8065** starting **May 26, 2003** at 9:00 a.m.

Deadline for the submission of Expression of Interest and duly accomplished Pre-qualification documents shall not be later than 4:00 p.m of June 16, 2003 addressed to:

RENATO A. DE RUEDA
Undersecretary and Chairperson, BAC-FAPs
c/o the BAC-FAPs Secretariat, Foreign Assisted and Special Programs Office
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Fax No. (632) 926-2689

Specific Notice

(Sgd.) **RENATO A. DE RUEDA**
DENR Undersecretary and BAC-FAPs Chairperson

(PDI - May 21 & 25, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Turnkey Implementation of the Market Management System for The Philippine Wholesale Electricity Spot Market

Date	12 May 2003
Loan No.	1984PHI
Contract No.	WESM-MMS-01

1. The National Power Corporation (NPC) has obtained a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) to finance the cost of Electricity Market and Transmission Development Project.
2. The National Transmission Corporation (TransCo), as the Purchaser/Executing Agency, is inviting sealed bids from eligible bidders registered within any ADB member country for the Turnkey Implementation of the Market Management System (MMS) for the Philippine Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM) ("the CONTRACT") which will include the supply, installation, commissioning, and testing of computer and communication systems necessary for the operation of the WESM.
3. Bidders may obtain further information and acquire the bidding documents from:

   **Special Bids and Awards Committee (SBAC)
   c/o Atty. Gina Lourdes D. Valeros
   Corporate Secretary
   National Transmission Corporation
   2/F Building I, NPC Complex
   Diliman, Quezon City
   Telefax No. 926-0928**
4. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested eligible bidders or authorized representatives upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Five Hundred Dollars (US$500.00)** to the TransCo Cashier.

   In case of a foreign firm/company, purchase of bidding documents can be made by remitting the equivalent amount in US Dollars of 520 (USD 520) to:

   Philippine National Bank (PNB) New York and for further credit to Account No. 249-702254-4 of the National Transmission Corporation (TransCo) with the Philippine National Bank, NPC Branch B.I.R. Road, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines.

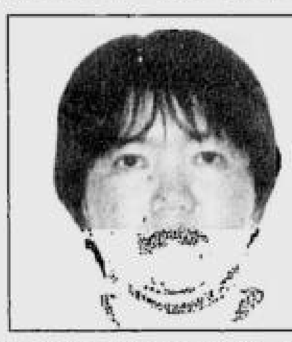
   A copy of the remittance instruction/cable must be submitted to TransCo together with a written application to the above address and must specify the name of the person and designation with complete address where documents will be forwarded.
5. A two-Stage-Two-Envelope bidding procedure will be adopted in accordance with Guideline for Procurement under ADB Loans (visit www.adb.org for details)
6. A pre-bid conference will be held at Sinulog Room, Fiesta Hall-NPC Complex, Diliman, Quezon City, on June 2, 2003 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.
7. Bids must be delivered at:

   **Special Bids and Award Committee
   c/o Ms. Elaine R. De Guzman
   Department of Energy
   4th Floor, DOE Building, Energy Center
   Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
   Telefax No. (632) 840-2173
   E-mail: edguzman@doe.gov.ph**

   on or before June 16, 2003 at 10:00 a.m. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of Five Hundred Thousand U.S. dollars (US$500,000.00). Late bids will be rejected.
8. The technical proposals will be opened immediately thereafter in the presence of bidder's representatives who choose to attend. The bid security certificate must be accessible for verification when the technical proposals are opened (i.e. not sealed with the price proposal). Otherwise, the bid will be disqualified as having no proof bid security.
9. The price proposals and supplementary price proposals, if provided, will be opened in the presence of the bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the time and date and at the address to be advised by the Purchaser/Executing Agency after approval of the ADB of the evaluation of the technical proposals

(Sgd.) **CYRIL C. DEL CALLAR**
Undersecretary
and Chair, Special Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - May 14 & 21, 2003)



NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

NOTICE is hereby given to the public that a WARRANT OF ARREST has been issued against accused **MILAFLOR TAMAR** or **MARIBEL MANSANARES**, whose picture appears above, in connection with Criminal Case No. 03-120 121 "People of the Philippines vs. MILAFLOR TAMAR or MARIBEL MANSANARES, et. al" for VIOLATION OF BP 22 pending before the Branch 1, Municipal Trial Court of Malolos, Bulacan.

ANY INFORMATION on the whereabouts of the accused may be coursed through Marilou Dichoco, Tel. (044) 766-3196; 0917-963-3321.

(PDI--May 21, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
Office of the President
Housing and Urban Development
Coordinating Council
**HOUSING AND LAND USE
REGULATORY BOARD**

RESOLUTION NO. 725-A
Series of 2003

RECTIFYING RESOLUTION NO. 725, S. OF 2002 DATED 19 JUNE 2002 TO INCLUDE LICENSE TO SELL

WHEREAS, Board Resolution No. 725, Series of 2002 dated 19 June 2002 particularly item No. 9 did not include "license to sell" where a DAR Exemption Clearance shall no longer be required;

WHEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS THE SAME IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Board confirms the inclusion of "license to sell" by rectifying item 9 to read as follows:

> "9. That, DAR Exemption Clearance be deleted as a requirement for the issuance of Development Permit and License to Sell for subdivision and condominium projects, and that in lieu thereof, a zoning certification issued by the HLURB Regional officer be submitted indicating that the project site is within the area zone for urban use (i.e. other than agricultural) prior to 15 June 1988".

APPROVED, this 19th day of March 2003, Quezon City.

MICHAEL T. DEFENSOR
Chairman, HUDCC

JOSE C. CALIDA
Undersecretary, DOJ
Ex-Officio Commissinoner

ROMULO Q. FABUL
Commissioner and
Chief Executive Officer

EDUARDO R. SOLIMAN, JR.
Undersecretary, DILG
Ex-Officio Commissioner

TERESITA A. DESIERTO
Commissioner

for
AUGUSTO B. SANTOS
Dep. Dir. General, NEDA
Ex-Officio Commissioner

FRANCISCO L. DAGÑALAN
Commissioner

JOEL I. JACOB
DPWH
Ex-Officio Commissioner

Attested by:

CHARITO B. LANSANG
Board Secretary

(PDI - May 21, 2003)

DEPARTMENT OF
TRADE & INDUSTRY
PHILIPPINES

IN THE MATTER OF THE PRELIMINARY DETERMINATION OF THE ANTI-DUMPING CASE AGAINST THE IMPORTATION OF CORRUGATING MEDIUM (WASTE-BASED) FROM THAILAND (ANTI-DUMPING CASE NO. 01-2002)

Philippine Industrial Paper Packaging Industry
Protestant
x---x

ORDER

On 23 December 2001, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) initiated a preliminary anti-dumping investigation of the petition filed by the Philippine Industrial Paper Packaging Industry, represented by Trans-National Paper Corporation and Container Corporation of the Philippines, against the importation of corrugating medium from Thailand.

The period of investigation was from 1999 to 2001. The observed period of dumping covered imports for 2001.

The preliminary investigation conducted by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), pursuant to the provisions of Subsection 3(f) of RA 8752, indicated that the provisionally estimated margins of dumping for corrugating medium from Thailand ranged from negative US$6.67/MT to negative US$38.23/MT or negative 2.98% to negative 18.04% of export price. The total volume of allegedly dumped corrugating medium was at 215.23 MT or 0.64% of the total Philippine imports. The volume of dumped imports and the provisionally estimated margins of dumping are below the de minimis requirement.

WHEREFORE, IN VIEW THEREOF, as provided under Subsection 3(g) of RA 8752, the Department hereby dismisses the anti-dumping case filed by the Philippine Industrial Paper Packaging Industry for lack of merit without prejudice for filing a similar case in the future.

Let the surety bond in the amount of Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (P500,000.00) be immediately released to the protestant since the case is not considered frivolous

Let copies of this Order be published in two (2) newspapers of general circulation

This Order shall take effect immediately.

SO ORDERED.

25 APRIL 2003.

MAR ROXAS
Secretary

(PDI--May 21, 2003)

Immaculata Academy of Malolos '53 reunion

ON MAY 24, Class 1955 of the Immaculata Academy of Malolos (now Holy Spirit Academy) will hold its reunion at the Montessori Integrated School of Antipolo.

The celebration starts at 11 a.m. For particulars, call Mila Villena-Tan at 374-2954, Magdalena Cruz-Divino at 426-0531,426-6266, or 0917-5335635, Purificacion Ramos-Cruz at 252-7638, Zorayda Dimaguiba-Manaligod at 373-5968, 0919-6990473, Teresita Tantoco-Zafra at 044-7911512, or Rizalina Santiago-Yuyongco at 044-7912319.

For details on the venue, call Sylvia Garcia Lazo at 372-4413, 697-5761.

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Lovingly Remembered

On the 2nd Death Anniversary

JOSE MANUEL L. VILLANUEVA

October 15, 1953 – May 21, 2001

Holy Masses will be offered at the following Churches:

Carmelite Convent, *Gilmore, Q.C.* .... 6:30 a.m.
Christ the King, *Q.C.* .... 6:30 a.m.
Mary the Queen, *San Juan* .... 6:00 a.m.
Mount Carmel, *Q.C.* .... 6:00 a.m./7:00 a.m./6:00 p.m.
Makati Medical Chapel .... 7:30 a.m./12:00 p.m.

The family request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

The family of the late

ROBERTO "REV" REVERENTE

Sincerely convey our deepest gratitude and appreciation
to all who offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers
and messages of sympathy, visited and kept vigil,
attended funeral rites and prayers and in many ways
comforted us in our moment of grief.

Maraming SALAMAT PO.

May God bless you All.

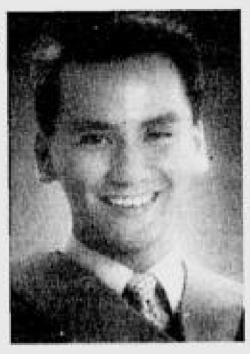
HOLY GARDENS MEMORIAL PARK
3F Unishoppe Complex, Quezon Avenue, Angono, Rizal
Tels. 651-1711 to 15. Direct Line 651-0737, 648-2196
Telefax 651-0756
Helping in the Grief of Many People

INTERMENT NOTICE

Name	Date of Interment	Time	Place of Interment	Place of Wake
ARMANDO P. SANTOS	MAY 21	2:00 P.M.	Holy Gardens Memorial Park Taytay, Rizal	Arlington Memorial Chapels Araneta Ave., Quezon City

www.holygardens.com
E-mail address: sales@holygardens.com

"Let us love not only with words and with our lips,
but in truth and in deed" - ***1 John 3:18***



Our Dearly Beloved

JOSEPH ERIC VERNON LEYRAN MEIM

(Quezon City, June 20, 1966 – London, May 13, 2003)

Peacefully joined our Lord on May 13, 2003 at the age of 36.

His loving parents, **BGen Eustaquio** (+) and **Leticia**; brothers & sisters, **Fr. Daniel Dennis, SDB, Maria Linda, John Nelson, Gina Liza,** and **Paul Niño**; brothers-in-law, **PS Supt Leopoldo N. Bataoil** and **Gordon Springer**; nieces, **Carmela** and **Angela Meim-Bataoil**; relatives & friends, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at La Funeraria Paz, Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City. In lieu of flowers, donations could be made to a foundation in Eric's memory.

Novena masses are as follows:
May 21-23 & 26: Funeraria Paz, Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City - 9:00 pm
May 24-25: Funeraria Paz, Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City - 8:00 pm

Memorial services will be after the 7 pm mass, Funeraria Paz, Manila Memorial Park, Tue, May 27, 2003.

Interment mass will be at 9:00 am, St. James the Great Church, Ayala Alabang Village on Wednesday, May 28, 2003.
Interment immediately follows at the Meim-Leyran Mausoleum, Plaza of Honor,
Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque City.

"Come to me all of you who are weary and
burdened and I will give you rest."
Matthew 11:28

Fe Delfin Magdamo

of New Washington, Aklan, and Digos City was peacefully united with her Creator and her loving husband LEOPOLDO ABELLO MAGDAMO (†) on May 18, 2003 at the age of 90.

She is survived by her children Fele, Betty and Rudy Paeis, Helen and Eduardo J. Guillergan, Leo and Zaida, Grace and Mendy Teoxon, Romeo and Tessie, Gil and Leah, Evalynn and Nelson Pe, grandchildren and great grandchildren. Also by her sister Choling 95 years old and her only brother Gabriel 93 years old.

Her remains lie in state at 221 Monte Maria Village Phase I Catalunan Grande, Davao City until Thursday and will be transferred to Digos City on Friday, May 23, 2003. She will lie in state at the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, Rizal Avenue.

She will be laid to rest at the Digos Cemetery on Saturday, May 24, 2003 after the 8:00 a.m. service.

One thing I seek; to dwell in the house of the Lord.
Psalm 27

RTC Judge Teofilo L. Guadiz, Jr.

of Dagupan City

Died in the Grace of our Lord on May 19, 2003
at Makati Medical Center at the age of 71
after receiving the Last Sacraments.

His loving wife **Revy Estrada-Guadiz**; children **Teofilo III** and **Georgina Relloto, Ma. Alma Fatima** and **Gil Tablizo**; grandchildren, brother & sisters and the rest of his family, request your prayers during this time of their bereavement.

His remains lie in state at St. Peter Memorial Chapel, 296 Quezon Avenue Ext., Quezon City from May 19 - 20, 2003, after which it will be brought to his residence in Dagupan City on Wednesday, May 21, 2003.

Interment will be announced later.

An obituary with a icture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...

INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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Jesus said: *" I am the Resurrection, if anyone believes in Me, even though he dies, he will live, and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die."*

Her children (**Ike, Erwin** and **Aji**), daughters-in-law (**Cristy, Perla** and **Marilou**) and grandchildren (**Ryan, Peewee, Peejay, Tiny, Princess, Mark, Jonjon** and **AJ**), together with her brothers (**Jorge** and **Roger**) and their families

Announce with joy and hope the triumphant crossing over from us to the everlasting love of the Father of our beloved

VICTORIA ESGUERRA BRIONES

on 19 May 2003 at the age of 77.

Her mortal remains lie in state at the Loyola Memorial Chapels, Inc., Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be at the Heritage Memorial Park, Taguig City on Saturday, 24 May 2003, after the Holy Mass at 9:00 a.m. at the Loyola Memorial Chapel.

"Let the words of my mouth meet your Favor, keep the thoughts of my heart before you, Lord, my rock, my redeemer..." — Psalm 21:15

OFELIA GONZALES PEÑAFLORIDA
"PEYANG"

of Pateros, Metro Manila

September 7, 1930 – May 19, 2003

Her loving husband **NETO**; children **LEAH & JUN; LIZA; LYRA & LEE**; brothers and sisters **LUIS** (+) **& PINAY; FREDDIE** (+) **& ESTER; ALICE; BOBBY** (+) **& CHATO; NELLIE; EDDIE & CAMILA**; grandchildren **INA, IRA** and **ENZO**; nieces, nephews, great grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Chapel B of the GARDEN OF MEMORIES, Bagong Kalsada, Pateros, Metro Manila.

Interment will be at the Garden of Memories, date of which is still tentative.

CLASSIFIEDS

Republic of the Philippines
PROCUREMENT SERVICE
INTER-AGENCY BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **PROCUREMENT SERVICE (PS)** invites G-EPS registered suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the **SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF FLYING SUIT (COVERALL) for the Philippine Air Force (PAF).**

The approved budget for this contract is **P 18,225,500.00.**

All interested parties are invited to attend the **Pre-Bid Conference** that will be held **on May 27, 2003, 9:30 a.m., Tuesday, at the PS Conference Room, 2nd Floor, PS Complex, Cristobal St., Paco, Manila.**

The bid documents shall be available at the **PS-PURCHASING DIVISION** starting May 14, 2003 upon payment of non-refundable fee of **Two Thousand Pesos (Php 2,000.00)**

The bidders shall drop their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three separate sealed envelopes in the bid box located at the Office of the Head of the IABAC Secretariat at the above mentioned address. Deadline for submission and opening of bids shall be on **June 10, 2003 at 9:30 a.m., Tuesday**

For more information, please call the **PS-Purchasing Division** at telephone nos 563-94-02 or 563-93-74.

PS reserves the right to waive any formality in the responses to the eligibility requirements and to this invitation. PS further reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **EDUARDO P. OPIDA**
Chairman, IABAC

(PDI--May 14 & 21, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
PROCUREMENT SERVICE
INTER-AGENCY BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **PROCUREMENT SERVICE (PS)** invites G-EPS registered suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the **SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF COPY PAPER for the PS Stocks.**

The approved budget for this contract is **P 9,486,000.00.**

All interested parties are invited to attend the **Pre-Bid Conference** that will be held **on May 27, 2003, 1:30 p.m., Tuesday, at the PS Conference Room, 2nd Floor, PS Complex, Cristobal St., Paco, Manila.**

The bid documents shall be available at the **PS-PURCHASING DIVISION** starting May 14, 2003 upon payment of non-refundable fee of **OneThousand Pesos (Php 1,000.00).**

The bidders shall drop their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three separate sealed envelopes in the bid box located at the Office of the Head of the IABAC Secretariat at the above mentioned address. Deadline for submission and opening of bids shall be on **June 10, 2003 at 1:30 p.m., Tuesday.**

For more information, please call the **PS-Purchasing Division** at telephone nos. 563-94-02 or 563-93-74.

PS reserves the right to waive any formality in the responses to the eligibility requirements and to this invitation. PS further reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **EDUARDO P. OPIDA**
Chairman, IABAC

(PDI--May 14 & 21, 2003)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
COTABATO CITY WATER DISTRICT
Cotabato City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Cotabato City Water District invites interested parties to submit sealed bids for the public bidding of supply, delivery and installation of one (1) Unit - FLOAT CONTROL VALVE 20" (50mm) Diameter, Flanged Type, Y-pattern with Double Chambered Diaphragm Actuated Hydraulically Operated, with approved budget of 1.5M.

Interested parties may secure bid documents and the checklist of the qualification requirements from Cotabato City Water District.

The schedule of the bidding activities is as follows:

PARTICULAR	DATE/TIME
Issuance of Bid Documents	May 29 to June 6, 2003/8:00 am-5:00 pm
Opening/Submission of bids	June 18, 2003, Wed./10:00 am

Bidders shall submit two (2) sealed envelopes containing a) TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS (e.g. qualification requirements indicated in the checklist, bid security as to form, amount and validity period, authority of signatory, after sales service/parts, catalogues/brochures/other literatures, etc.); and b) FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS at the Cotabato City Water District.

The CCWD reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive any defect therein and make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the CCWD. The CCWD likewise assumes no obligation for whatever losses that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of the bids, nor does it guarantee that the award shall be made.

(Sgd.) **MANUEL D. MAGDAEL**
Chairperson
Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI--May 21 & 28, 2003)

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Editor **Raul O. Marcelo**
Subsection Editor **Regina Galang Reyes**

A small step out of government, a giant leap for the 'sun'

By Cecile G. Garcia

CAREER TALES

AN EMPLOYEE 20 years in government service would have looked forward to a much-awaited retirement. But Cynthia R. Mamon proved that it is never too late in one's career to reach for the stars, or in this case, for the sun.

A decade after leaving government, Mamon is president and managing director of Sun Microsystems Philippines, Inc. and the only lady CEO of a major multinational IT company in the country today, and for that matter, of any local Sun subsidiary in the world. An inspiring feat, by any standards.

Los Baños roots

Admitting to having had "simple ambitions," Mamon never dreamed she'd be CEO of a prestigious US-based company. "I relate to the simplicity of life in Los Baños where I grew up, studied and married," she says.

She was director of the management information service division of the Philippine Council for Agricultural Resources and Research Development (PCARRD) under the Department of Science and Technology when she made the decision to leave government service—a move that would transform her life.

Mamon had risen from the ranks, starting out as a student assistant. Based in Los Baños, Laguna, her job involved research, management information, planning and development. "I loved my job. I was attached to it," she says.

But, she gave it up when her husband took over Philippine Systems Products Inc. (PSPI), a company he partly owned, that was the authorized local business partner of Sun Microsystems US in 1992. Recounts Mamon, "PSPI was having problems. They could lose the business. My husband asked me to retire because he needed my help."

New challenges

Shifting from a service-driven group engaged in agriculture to a private business required a lot of her, says Mamon. "In a way, I was prepared because I had been an IT user in my previous job." Furthermore, her long experience in government had given her the credibility needed in the burgeoning IT industry.

Her new career presented new challenges to Mamon, who rose from being marketing manager to become EVP and finally, head of the company. Under her leadership, PSPI, which later on became Sun Microsystems Philippines, Inc., experienced an almost phenomenal turnaround. "We took over officially in 1997," she points out. In the same year, they became a partner in a joint venture with the mother company in the States. Notes Mamon, "It was the first time an American firm had placed equity in a local subsidiary." It was an indication of the trust they had earned.

Servant leadership

Not having any formal training in IT has never been an obstacle to success. "IT is totally different," contends Mamon. "You have quotas and targets to meet. Competition is very tough. You have to be dynamic and vigilant." Yet, Mamon views success in a different way. "The key to success, whether in government or in private business is people management. It's how you manage your staff, business partners and clients." A good CEO, according to her, knows how to relate to people. He nurtures them. "I believe the business will prosper if you know how to take care of people."

An advocate of servant leadership, Mamon has a deep sense of mission. "If every effort is directed to this, everything becomes easy," she says. She upholds the basic values, maintaining that employees should have faith and trust in their leader. Profoundly spiritual and religious, she avers, "I believe Jesus is my ultimate CEO." Her life's passion, according to her, is to help people grow, to care for their hearts and souls.

In the workplace, she sees to it that her employees are prepared for every kind of challenge. She remarks, "It's not just a matter of appealing to their sense of responsibility. It's more than selling skills, though this is important. I make sure they're properly motivated. They must know that providing quality service and taking care of clients and protecting them is part of their job." Mamon says she would think twice before letting go or firing any employee.

Role model

A provincial lass at heart, Mamon looks up to her mother whom she believes has been a tremendous positive influence in her life. Her mom, now 84, formerly a dentist at the UP Los Baños Infirmary, was widowed at 39. "She brought us up single-handedly," says Mamon, who fourth among seven children. "My mother had been a role model for me. I have tried to emulate her strong character, determination and faith."

Mamon earned her degree in BS Home Technology, major in food and nutrition research from UP Los Baños. A PCARRD scholar, she got her MA in Agribusiness Management from UP Diliman. A PCARRD-US AID scholarship enabled her to obtain a certificate in Information Systems Specialist Program at the George Washington University in Washington DC.

She has been married 26 years to Mario Mamon with whom she has two sons and two daughters.

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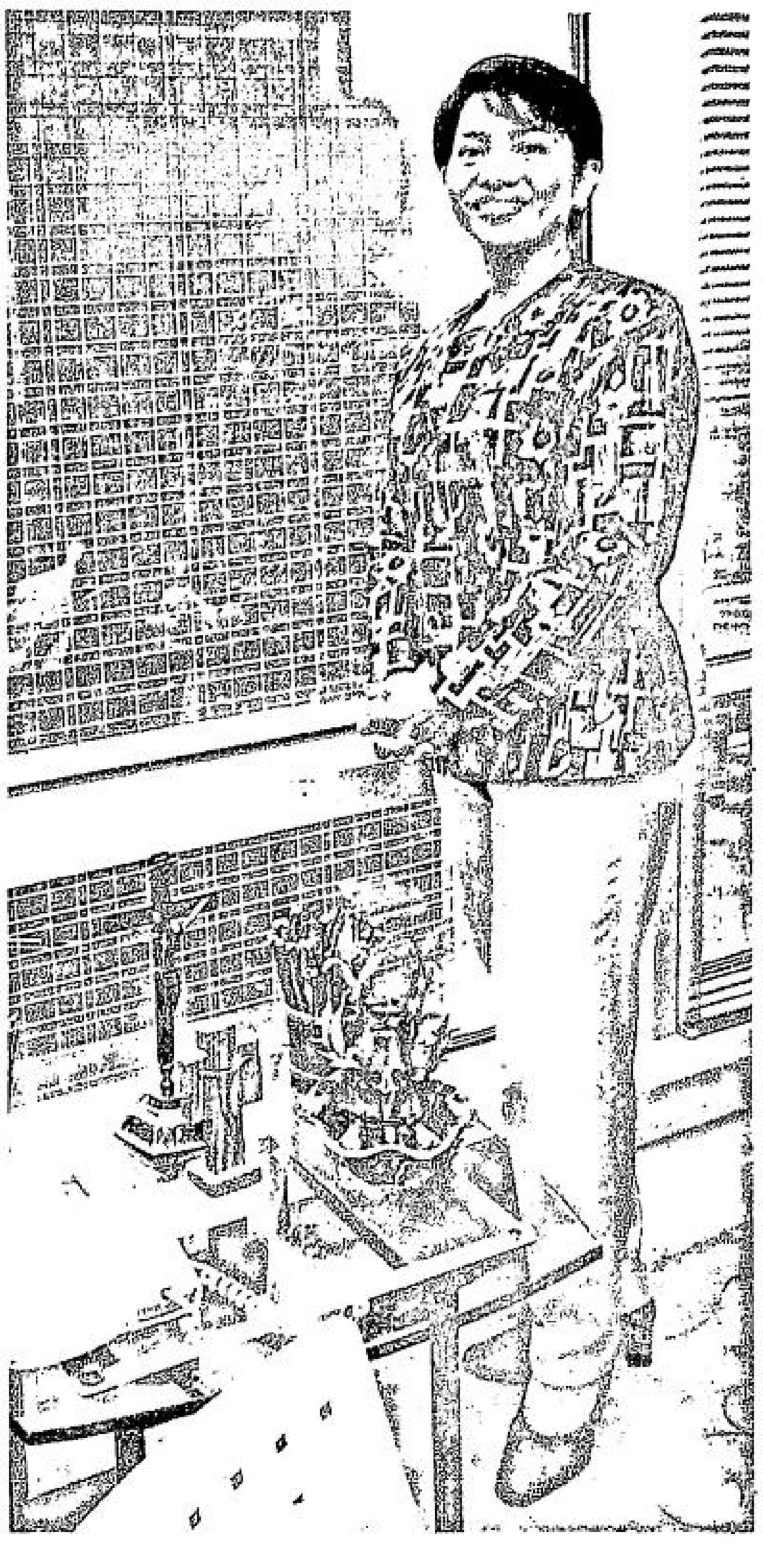

MAMON, president and managing director of Sun Microsystems Philippines, Inc.

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Parts and Service
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‘Should I leave a job I love for high-paying work?’

By Tita Datu Puangco

I AM a Psychology graduate, presently working in one of the manufacturing firms in Marikina as human resource and administration staff. Even before I started looking for work, I decided I would not accept a job that was not related to my course. After three months, I was able to land a job in a human resource department on a contractual basis. I was tasked mainly with recruitment and time keeping. Other times I handled administrative and clerical tasks. Before my contractual appointment ended, I was told that they could not absorb me even with my satisfactory performance because of the low production schedule. So I started to look for work started again. After three months, I received a call from my previous employer saying that their request for another regular employee was approved.

I have been in this company for one and a half years. I find my work very challenging and exciting specially on the new ideas and concepts I am learning on human resources. The people around me are nice and very supportive especially my co-employees in our department. My present rate is enough to meet my needs and to help my family with our daily expenses.

What is bothering me the offer of a friend for me to get a job as a call center agent for a starting salary of P12,000, quite big compared to what I am presently receiving. I have no assurance I am going to be happy with what I will be doing. One reason though, I want to consider the job is the amount I will receive monthly. With this amount I would be able to help my family more and be able to save easily for my future.

Last month, I decided to inquire about graduate studies to equip myself in my work and to prepare to handle higher positions in the future. However, the tuition fee is quite expensive and it is difficult for me to sustain my studies with my current salary.

I am scheduled for an interview next week for the call center position and still don't know what to do. Hope you can help me decide on this matter.

Confused HR Staff

Advice
FOR THE
ANXIOUS PERSON
AT WORK

What a dilemma! What is vital is for you to discover what truly matters for you. I can sense from your letter that you derive much fulfillment and excitement being in the field of human resources. You worked hard to deserve the position you have now. In my view, stick to the field of human resources. As the world of business grows more complex, the value of human resource management will grow.

Value of HR people

Look around you and see how human resource practitioners have grown in terms of compensation and influence. The more senior ones have assumed the role of strategic partners of management. In our consulting company we have a client base of 300 companies. Every year, we have the major task of updating our database because human resource managers are upwardly mobile. Many of them are "pirat-able" because executives have discovered the high importance of good human resource managers.

What you have to do is to pursue that master's degree. You don't have to take it all at once. Acquire the units that you can afford every year. Better still get exposure in the field by asking your manager to join the Personnel Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP). It has many programs that can enrich your knowledge and skills. Then, you can also take short human resource courses. We have the Ancilla Business Training Center that offers regular short courses.

Reality of call centers

While the offer of the call center agent may be attractive in terms of initial compensation, ask yourself the following questions. What is the career track of an agent? While the initial pay is high, it may be a dead-end career for you. What is your personality and interest? If you are an extrovert, with a high interest in working and dealing face to face with people, you may find a call center job confining. The call center agent job requires long hours of discipline conversing with customers on the telephone.

In call centers, people take shifts. Most call centers work 24 hours round the clock. Most customers are in the West-their daytime is our nighttime. If you have dreams of pursuing further studies as a call center agent, forget it. What happens when it is your turn to go on night shift?

You may think I have something against call centers. Not at all. In fact, the creation of call centers has helped the economy a lot. They have replaced semiconductors as employers capable of hiring many people. However, in your case, don't be tempted. Pursue your current career, eventually you will get a salary or offer that will make the compensation of a call center job pale in comparison. God bless!

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

(Ms Puangco is CEO and chairman of the board of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send comments, feedback or requests for advice through e-mail advice@ancillaedc.com.ph or fax to 892-2902.)

How working moms can deal with stress

WORKING MOM
An Mercado Alcantara

ARE you a stress junkie? One who thrives in high-pressure situations and craves for the adrenalin rush of crisis moments? Are you one of those who spend vacations looking for work? Are you getting into arguments at home about your work schedule? Are you getting up in the middle of the night to work more and more often? Are your attempts to cut down on work failing?

Then,it might be time for a lifestyle check. While stress comes with the territory for working moms, it should not get to the point that the level of stress affects your well being, your relationships, and the quality of work. In the May 2003 issue of Metro Working Mom, Cass Syyap, clinical director of the Recovery Circle Foundation, shares how work can become an addiction for working moms.

Work addict

"Unlike chemical addiction, where drugs are unanimously considered bad, work addiction is a unique dynamic. It is often praised because society views this individual as being very industrious, dedicated and committed to her work," says Syyap. But what could pass off as a virtue, if taken to an extreme could in fact be a symptom of a deeper issue. Many workaholics drown themselves in work because they are trying to escape from an unhealed emotional wound, some unresolved pain they haven't had the courage to process. They escape from unpleasant feelings by taking on work, cramming their schedule and burning themselves out so that there is no time nor energy for emotional turmoil.

Since addiction is progressive in nature, its negative consequences aren't evident at the onset. Syyap describes what he calls the life cycle of work addiction: It starts at the honeymoon stage, in which it appears positive and healthy enough, with seemingly no consequences. As time goes on, this moves on to the maturity stage where the individual enters a give and take process (some good and some bad), characterized by the need to compromise certain things (relationships, health, recreational activities, social activities) in order to feed the addiction-work. Eventually, this will progress to the stage of decline, where negative consequences will outweigh the positive (arguments with spouses or children, physical health, decline in professional productivity and efficiency).

Finally, this will culminate to a stage of betrayal (divorce, hospitalization, termination from work, social isolation) where the individual hits rock bottom.

Withdrawal techniques

If you find yourself falling into the maturity stage or the decline stage of stress, it's time to pull back and reassess your lifestyle. You might try the following steps to withdraw from your addiction:

- Learn to say no. Prioritize and give up things that are not important. Not everything is urgent.
- Cut down on alcohol, coffee, and nicotine. These might provide temporary relief, but in the long run they increase your stress levels.
- Exercise, There's nothing like sweating it out to release some tension. Physical activity can also help you sleep better.
- Go out with your friends. Talking to people who know you will helps release tension.
- Consult a therapist with whom you can explore the reasons for your lifestyle as well as exploring other ways to live your life.

(An Mercado-Alcantara is editor in chief of Metro Working Mom published by ABS-CBN Publishing. For more tips, pick up this month's issue with Zsa' Zsa Padilla and Dolphy on the cover.)

Career consultants provide guidelines for talent retention

SANTAMARIA

BARICAUA

SANTAMARIA

DO you want to keep your talented employees? High performing and high potential employees are usually the first ones to "fly the coop" or leave the company since they are highly "piratable."

To answer this question, Thelma Geraldine Baricaua, senior consultant of Career Systems, Inc., will provide guidelines on how managers and supervisors can keep "high flyers" in the company on May 28 in the special People at Work Live! Seminar Series on Career Development Strategies.

This three-day seminar series, which will conducted from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. each day, will also tackle how people at work and job seekers can successfully manage their careers and how the Pinoy workforce can develop world class competencies.

The topic for May 27 is "Managing Your Career to the Top" with Josie Santamaria, president of Career Systems, Inc., as the main lecturer. On May 29, the topic is "Developing the Global Pinoy" with Jorge Santamaria, managing director of Career Systems as the lecturer.

The daily learning sessions combine a lecture and a facilitated discussion with CEOs of well-known companies to provide a rare and innovative learning opportunity for people who want to grow in their careers.

The CEO forum will be facilitated by Myra Lapus, senior consultant of Career Systems. Some of the CEOs who will be participating in this event are Emily Abrera, Chairman of McCann Erikson Philippines; Carlos Ejercito, president of United Laboratories, Inc.; Gary Teves, president of Land Bank of the Philippines; Jose Cuisia, Jr., president of The Philippine American Life & General Insurance Co.; Abraham Pascual of Pascual Group of Companies; Joaquin Quintos, country general manager of IBM Philippines; Atty. Felipe Gozon, chair of GMA Network Inc.; Sandy Prieto Romualdez, president of Philippine Daily Inquirer and Nieves Confesor, Dean of the Asian Institute of Management.

The event will be held at the Santiago Hall, Mezzanine, Equitable PCI Bank Tower 1, Makati Ave., Makati City.

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Philippine Daily Inquirer, Optimus Managers & Advisors, Inc. and Career Systems, Inc., the country's leading career development consultancy firm, have partnered to present this special People at Work Live! Seminar Series.

Companies who care for people at work and are helping bring this world-class learning to the public at affordable prices are Microdata Systems and Management, Inc., Job Market, Power Books, Super Ferry, ABS-CBN Publishing, Inc./ Metro Working Mom, Blue Collar Magazine, Land Bank of the Philippines, Philippine Long Distance andTelephone Co., Equitable PCI Bank, McDonald's Philippines, Philamlife and McGraw Hill Education.

For more information and to register, call 897-8808 local 554 or 935-6678.

Impact of SARS on global business

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

WHILE SARS may have subsided in the headlines, it remains a significant issue for 20 percent of companies affected globally, and 70 percent in Asia, according to a new survey by Mercer Human Resource Consulting. Currently, it ranks higher than corporate scandals and job security on the business agenda.

The global survey of over 260 companies affected by SARS found that business activity remains significantly disrupted. Over 42 percent of organizations encourage staff to work at home while 51 percent provide them with masks. Travel is restricted by 79 percent of employers and 62 percent are unable to conduct regular business meetings for fear of spreading the illness. The precaution of screening staff and visitors is still exercised by 46 percent of companies, and a similar number (43 percent) make quarantine compulsory for those staff with, or at risk of, SARS.

Other measures used by companies include enforcing leave, carrying out medical checks, canceling social events, implementing contingency plans and increasing office cleaning.

"Now the initial panic is over, employers are taking more measured actions, but the mood is still cautious," said Hugh Bucknall, Worldwide Partner at Mercer. "Companies have had to rethink their work procedures and be far more flexible."

The majority of respondents appear to be optimistic that SARS will end soon. Over two-thirds (67 percent) believe that it will cease to be an issue in three months' time. Only 20 percent think the illness will have a longer lasting impact while 13 percent are unsure.

"Results suggest growing optimism about the outlook for SARS, and that there's light at the end of the tunnel," said Bucknall. In the long-term, only a minority (7 percent) feels that SARS will have had a serious effect on business. Most (80 percent) say it will have no or little impact going forward and some (4 percent) even feel it will have a positive influence on operations. The rest say they cannot predict the outcome. "This is a testing time for companies, but the discipline and organization needed to deal with such a crisis may even benefit them in the long term," said Bucknall.

The companies affected by SARS are predominantly in Hong Kong, China, Singapore, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. These conclusions were based on data collected between April 28 and May 13 this year by Mercer Human Resource Consulting, a global consulting organization.

A small step...

From page B0

Mamon believes technology should be applied to uplift the quality of life of Filipinos and to enhance it. She would like to use it as a tool in nation building. "I would like to help provide the technology for the further development of our country. If I can do this, I'll be able to create more job opportunities for Filipinos who deserve to be gainfully employed."

What Mamon hopes to develop is an IT project that will help farmers, thus bringing IT closer to the heart of agriculture. "I suppose it's going back to where I come from, to my roots," she says.

Besides contributing to the nation's growth, Mamon would like to continue the apostolate she and her family have begun. The Mamon family members have all completed the Light in the Spirit Seminar (LSS). "I know we are meant to follow our calling, the family life apostolate," she says.

With all that she accomplished, what advice would Mamon give to employees, especially those who feel they may be stuck in dead-end careers? She says, "They must learn to adapt lifelong learning. They should keep abreast, be informed, learn from books, their peers and from the environment. Learning is also about life."

(Do you want to learn from Ms. Mamon's experiences? You can send your letters requesting for career advice to peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph. Ms. Mamon will answer your letters in the soon-to-be launched "Ask Your CEO" column which eight topnotch CEOs will take turns writing.)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

'Should I leave a job I love for high-paying work?'

By Tita Datu Puangco

I AM a Psychology graduate, presently working in one of the manufacturing firms in Marikina as human resource and administration staff. Even before I started looking for work, I decided I would not accept a job that was not related to my course. After three months, I was able to land a job in a human resource department on a contractual basis. I was tasked mainly with recruitment and time keeping. Other times I handled administrative and clerical tasks. Before my contractual appointment ended, I was told that they could not absorb me even with my satisfactory performance because of the low production schedule. So I started to look for work started again. After three months, I received a call from my previous employer saying that their request for another regular employee was approved.

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How working moms can deal with stress

Working Mom

An Mercado Alcantara

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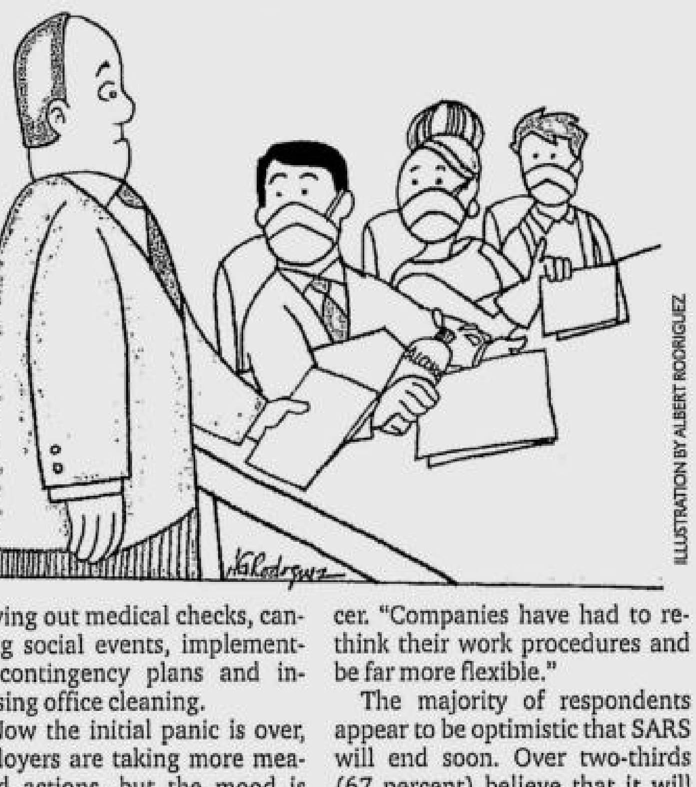
ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

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The majority of respondents appear to be optimistic that SARS will end soon. Over two-thirds (67 percent) believe that it will cease to be an issue in three months' time. Only 20 percent think the illness will have a longer lasting impact while 13 percent are unsure.

"Results suggest growing optimism about the outlook for SARS, and that there's light at the end of the tunnel," said Bucknall. In the long-term, only a minority (7 percent) feels that SARS will have had a serious effect on business. Most (80 percent) say it will have no or little impact going forward and some (4 percent) even feel it will have a positive influence on operations. The rest say they cannot predict the outcome. "This is a testing time for companies, but the discipline and organization needed to deal with such a crisis may even benefit them in the long term," said Bucknall.

The companies affected by SARS are predominantly in Hong Kong, China, Singapore, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. These conclusions were based on data collected between April 28 and May 13 this year by Mercer Human Resource Consulting, a global consulting organization.

A small step...

From page B0

Mamon believes technology should be applied to uplift the quality of life of Filipinos and to enhance it. She would like to use it as a tool in nation building. "I would like to help provide the technology for the further development of our country. If I can do this, I'll be able to create more job opportunities for Filipinos who deserve to be gainfully employed."

What Mamon hopes to develop is an IT project that will help farmers, thus bringing IT closer to the heart of agriculture. "I suppose it's going back to where I come from, to my roots," she says.

Besides contributing to the nation's growth, Mamon would like to continue the apostolate she and her family have begun. The Mamon family members have all completed the Light in the Spirit Seminar (LSS). "I know we are meant to follow our calling, the family life apostolate," she says.

With all that she accomplished, what advice would Mamon give to employees, especially those who feel they may be stuck in dead-end careers? She says, "They must learn to adapt lifelong learning. They should keep abreast, be informed, learn from books, their peers and from the environment. Learning is also about life."

(Do you want to learn from Ms. Mamon's experiences? You can send your letters requesting for career advice to peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph. Ms. Mamon will answer your letters in the soon-to-be launched "Ask Your CEO" column which eight topnotch CEOs will take turns writing.)

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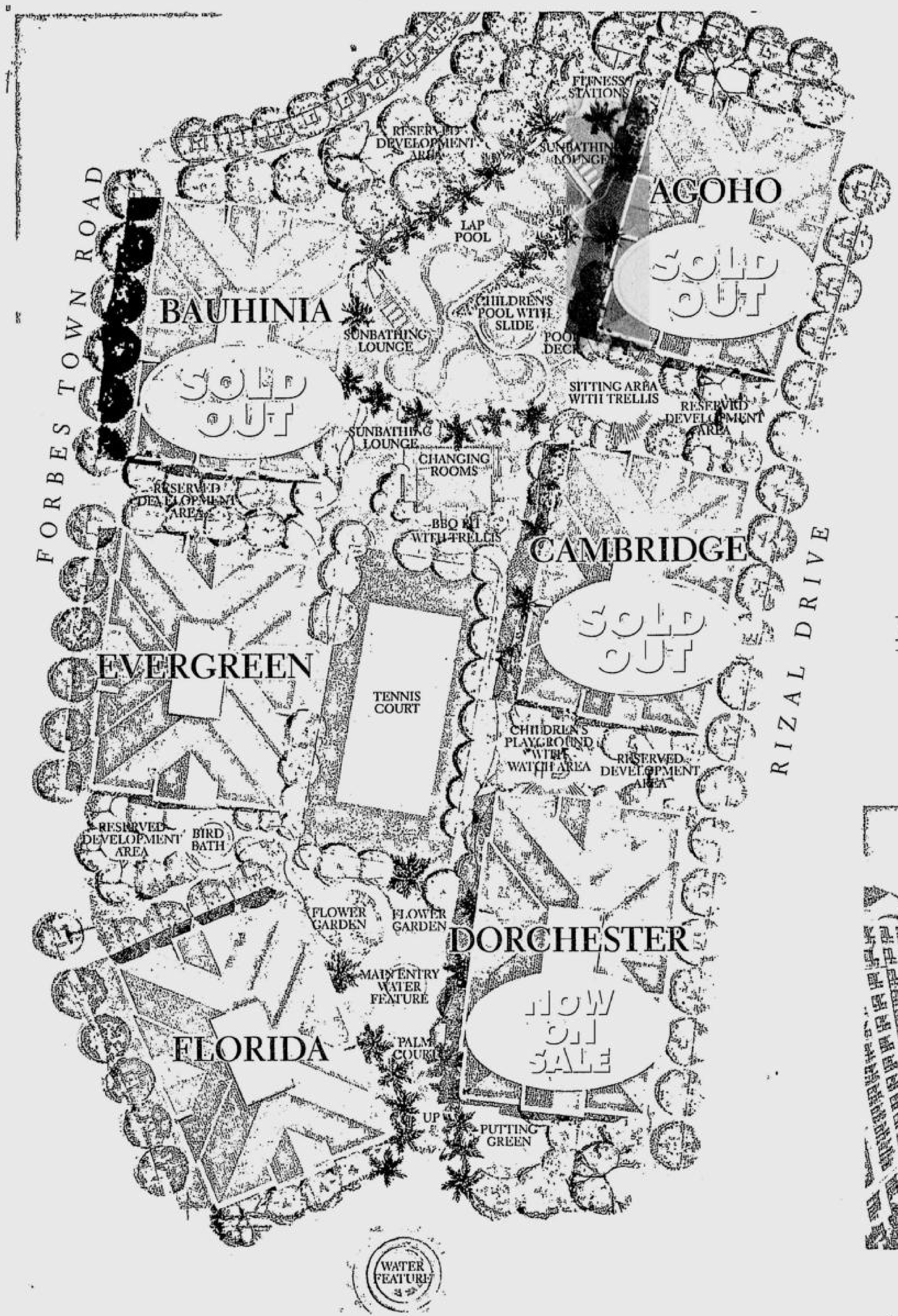
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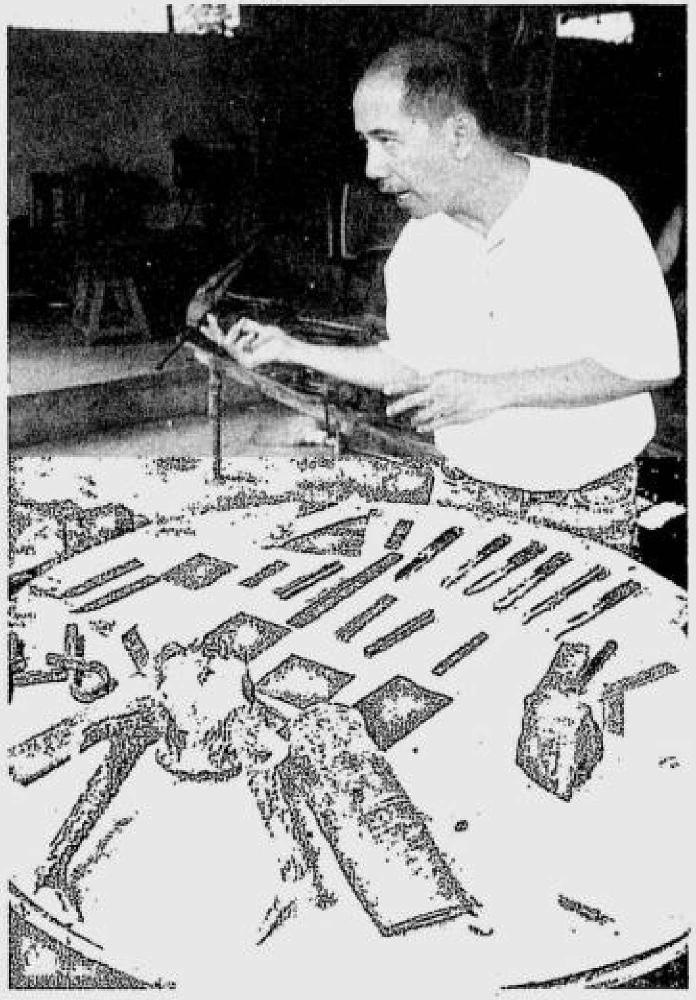

goes to Taal

We left Manila for a day and immersed ourselves in a totally Taal experience. We explored ancestral homes, sampled mouthwatering goodies and watched people weave, create intricate embroidery and produce 'balisongs.'

We even gave 'panutsa'-making a shot. And we captured everything with the Sony Ericsson T310's Communicam

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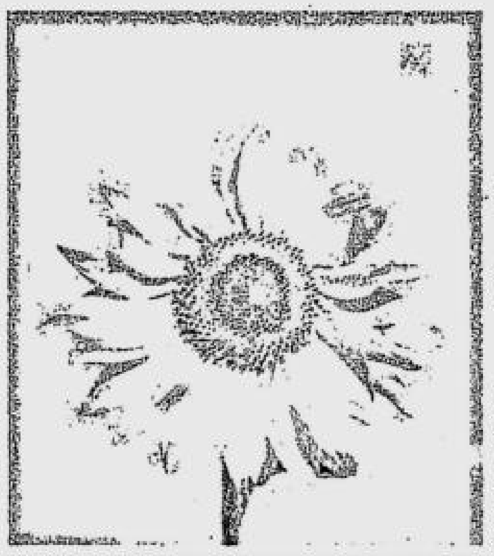

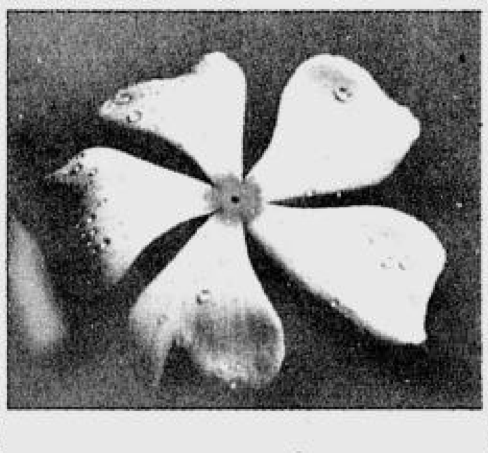

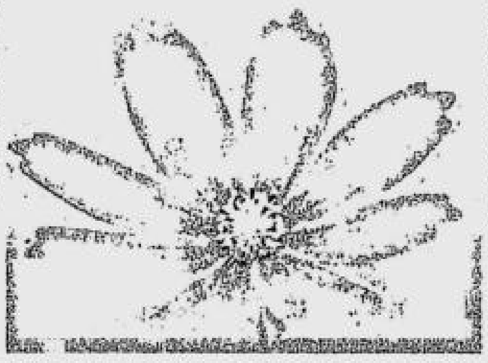

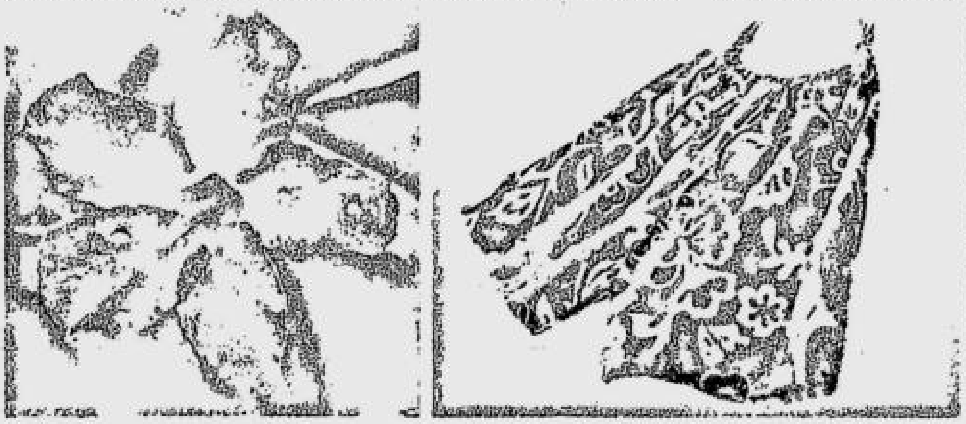

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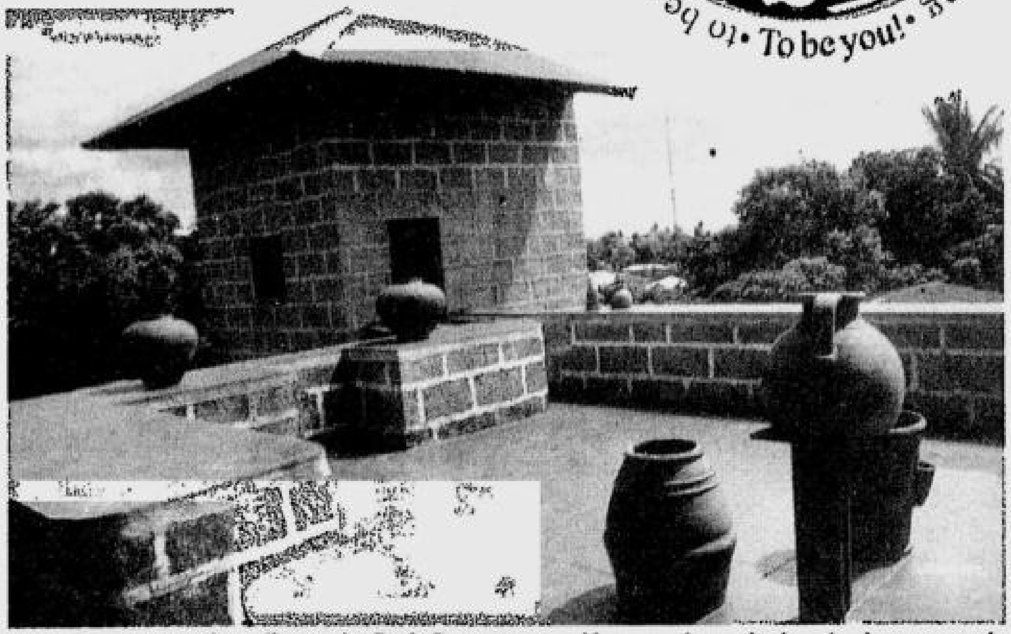

IT'S a long way to the toilet at the De la Rosa ancestral home, where the *batalan* is separated from the rest of the house.

Taal's antique architecture is a beautiful and important reminder of our rich colonial past

NO, she's not Sadako. A visitor at Café Punzalan stares at herself in the mirror.

Houses of history and Spirits

By Jason Doplito
2bU! correspondent
Photos by Omar Romero

SUMPTUOUS meals used to be prepared using these *palayoks*.

THESE days, being transported 100 years back in time can be as easy as taking a three-hour drive from Manila. All you have to do is drive to Taal.

The town of Taal has a secret, perhaps oveshadowed by its more famous icon, the volcano, but no less interesting. Some distance from crowded Tagaytay, the town and its secret are enveloped in the mystery of the past, where tradition overrides trends and history lingers in the mountain air.

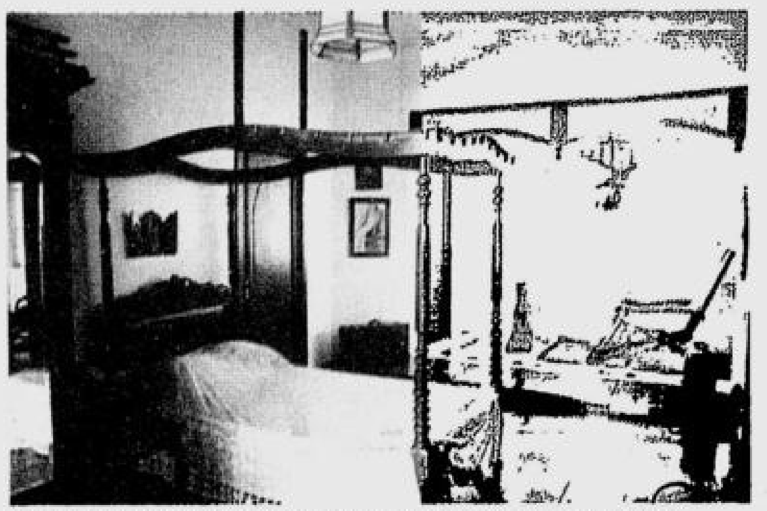
The secret slowly reveals itself as one enters this quaint town. Narrow streets are guarded by ancestral homes, whose architecture dates back to the Spanish and American periods. Ahead is the looming structure of Taal Basilica, evidently the center of the plaza as religion is to its people.

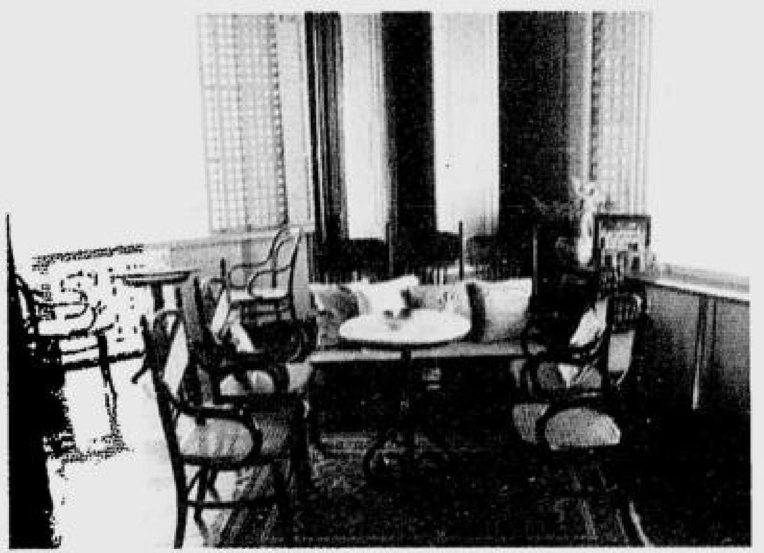
When you hear townspeople speak, you are transported to bygone days when Tagalog sounded more sonorous and poetic. Here the secret is revealed: the town is so near to us, yet its roots go back to ancient, mist-shrouded times.

Old World charm

Aside from its people, the quaint charms of Taal lie in its houses. The smell and sight of wood give off a whiff of energy unlike anything you can experience in the city. The Old World takes over the senses, and one begins to imagine just how it must have felt like living in homes that could now stand as museums.

Filled with antique furniture and memorabilia, these residences hold a unique attraction to us. But even if they've stood the test of time so far, these houses are still in danger of crumbling down. Appropriate preservation measures are still a challenge for most Taaleños, as they are proving to be a monumental effort.


OPEN-SPACE bedrooms are usually only separated by dividers.


KAPE PARTY. Conversations were kept alive in the sala with the *kapeng barako*.

Fortunately, the local government has a good grasp of this problem, and it has set its goal on making it to the Unesco list of World Heritage sites. Taal was, in fact, nominated in 1989 but didn't make it. That served as a eye-opener for the local government to exert more effort to preserve its local cultural heritage.

In 1997, two prominent families undertook major renovations of their own houses. The first one was the Ylagan-De la Rosa ancestral house, which had become a dilapidated structure prior to its restoration. It was originally a communal house intended for five families, until Dr. De la Rosa bought out their shares to begin restoration work on the building.

Local attraction

The biggest piece of work involved collecting bits and pieces of other antique materials in order to put together what was lost over the years. These days, the restored residence has become a big local attraction, with its big rooms and interesting artifacts like a wooden play horse, carabao cart, rice jars and *salakot*. The *alahibe*, the early means of water storage through recycling, has been converted into a kitchen complete with antique cooking wares. On the second floor, the *batalan*, or toilet, is kept separate from the rest of the house and can be reached by following the course of a bridgeway decorated with a large jar. Meanwhile, the sala, typical of old Spanish houses, boasts of large windows that can slide sideways for wall-to-wall openings that let in the famously fresh Taal air.

There are only three bedrooms in the house. The explanation for this is that in the olden days, the *apos* or grandchildren would all be sleeping in the sala on a *banig* or mat. But to enjoy the night breeze, windows would be kept open and mosquito nets draped over the sleeping children.

Heroic forebear

The second vintage house restored was that of the Villavicencios. The antique structure on 33 Marella St. was once a secret meeting place of revolutionary soldiers that included Andres Bonifacio. Stories have it that they would disguise themselves as *sabungeros* (cockfighters) to avoid arousing the suspicion of the Spanish military. It was Gliceria Marella de Villavicencio, heroic forebear of the present tenants, who used to run the household and was thus named the general sponsor of the revolutionary forces by Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo.

At the entrance of the house are documents tracing the genealogy of the Villavicencio bloodline. There are pictures of the family's ample progeny. Even Juan Luna was said to have done a painting of the first Villavicencio couple.

Many of the original pieces in the house still survive, since these are made of Philippine hardwood like *narra*, *ipil* and *molave*. A steep stairway leads to the second floor, where the walls are adorned with oil-on-canvas murals done during the early 1900s. The ceiling is perhaps the only one of its kind in Taal; it is covered with tin and embossed with floral motifs.

There are also personal items like shoes and photographs that are placed randomly around the house (which can be quite eerie sometimes).

Disrespectful

The present-day owners of the two houses say that spirits may still reside in their ancestral houses. Respect for tradition and the home remains an important aspect for the Taaleños. This means that lack of regard for an ancestral house could anger spirits and cause them to haunt careless visitors. This is also one reason only very few film and TV crews have been allowed to shoot inside the houses, since even the movement of furniture can already be considered disrespectful.

But for how long can things stay the way they are? Maintaining these houses in their pristine state cannot be left to the spirits alone. Here, perhaps, lies another charm of Taal—its resistance to modernity and change. In this town, where the urge to preserve the past exists, the natural beauty of history speaks for itself.

E-mail the author at jason_2bu@yahoo.com

THIS former water storage room is converted into a kitchen.

A SMALL corner at the Villavicencio residence serves as a music room.

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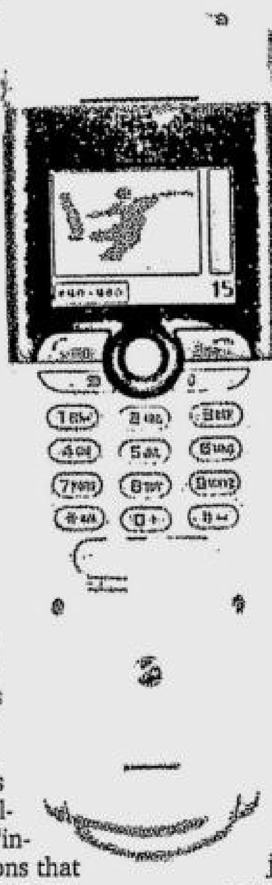
SONY ERICSSON T310

Fun in your hands, light on the pocket

By Edwin P. Sallan
2bU! Correspondent

THE NEXT generation of mobile phones is already here.

With cool standard features such as high-resolution color displays, polyphonic ringtones, built-in organizers, multimedia messaging (MMS) capabilities and support for GPRS (forget what it means, what's important is that you can access Internet content with your mobile phone), today's smartphones, as many would like to call them, can certainly do a whole lot more than just talking and texting.



If you're one of the few remaining kids on your block who have yet to upgrade to these new toys, fret not. Your social life isn't over yet. You still have plenty of time to get one before the rest of the gang gives you the silent treatment.

In fact, you have a wide array of next-gen mobiles to choose from. One of them is the Sony Ericsson T310, a new model that we were fortunate enough to test extensively over the past few weeks.

The T310 is a phone that has all standard features mentioned above, and then some. Sony Ericsson is marketing this particular model as a "fun phone," and it does offer plenty of entertainment value for its targeted young market, although it is also hampered by "internal" and "external" limitations that somewhat spoils the fun.

Blocky look and feel

For starters, the phone comes in two variations: navy blue or orange trimmings highlighting the smooth light gray matte finish. Like most Sony Ericsson phones, it is slightly bigger than a Zippo lighter and has that typical blocky look and feel to it that most kids will find cool.

The keys in the fashionably small keypad are nicely spaced and also feel comfortable to navigate, although folks with large hands and fingers may have a harder time with them. We recommend you hold your T310 tight, as the smooth matte finish has made it slip out of our hands quite a few times. Thank God we were on the sofa every time this happened.

Personalize away

The T310 offers plenty of customization options, from composing your own polyphonic ringtones to changing your wallpapers, screen savers and background pictures on the fly. The built-in ringtones, screen saver, themes and pictures are really nice, but the T310's ability to download more via infrared, cable and WAP sweetens this deal even more.

Still, the bad news: As with all other phones, you have to buy the needed data cable separately in order to download stuff from your PC. And downloading stuff via WAP/GPRS needs some configuring from your network provider.

Actually, you can also get a lot of goodies via MMS sent to you by friends, but if you really want to personalize your phone with your own pics, you'll need the snap-on Communicam mobile digital camera which will be packaged with the phone when it hits the market.

User-friendly

If you've already owned and enjoyed Ericsson cellular phones in the past, particularly models like the A2618, R320 and R520, then you should already be familiar with the graphical menu interface of the T310. Its navigational joystick is particularly a pleasure, as it makes moving around the phone a lot easier.

But if you're switching from a Nokia or any other brand, it may take a while before you get used to Sony Ericsson's system. Speed texters will find it frustrating that the keypad is not as sensitive to their fingers as they would want it to. Loading the built-in games (more on that later) also takes longer, and downloading stuff even more.

> It looks cool and compact, and has plenty of features to enjoy. Just don't expect the works

It would have been nice if Sony Ericsson had opted to utilize the superior Symbian OS used in its P800 for the T310. The latter's firmware isn't bad, but can stand further improvements.

And then there are the games. The three titles included in the T310, namely, Ace of Spade, Minigolf and a special edition of Tony Hawk Pro Skater 4, all look great on the color display. The slow loading and clunky gameplay, however, can prevent players from realizing their full potential.

For instance, you can only pull a limited number of skateboarding tricks using the T310's keypad in THPS4. Perhaps the downloadable titles will fare much better.

The bottom line

A lot of people will probably feel happy with the Sony Ericsson T310. Very few will care that it doesn't support Bluetooth (not a big deal, really) and does not include a built-in MP3 player, probably to keep its price down.

This is not, however, a phone designed for the very restless, a good number of whom will probably find the gadget "*bitin*" in many respects. This fun phone would've been a lot more fun if the separately sold "fun accessories" like the snap-on digital camera and FM stereo handsfree are included as standard features.

If you're willing to spend extra for these and other options, then you'll have a real blast with this otherwise cool-looking handset.

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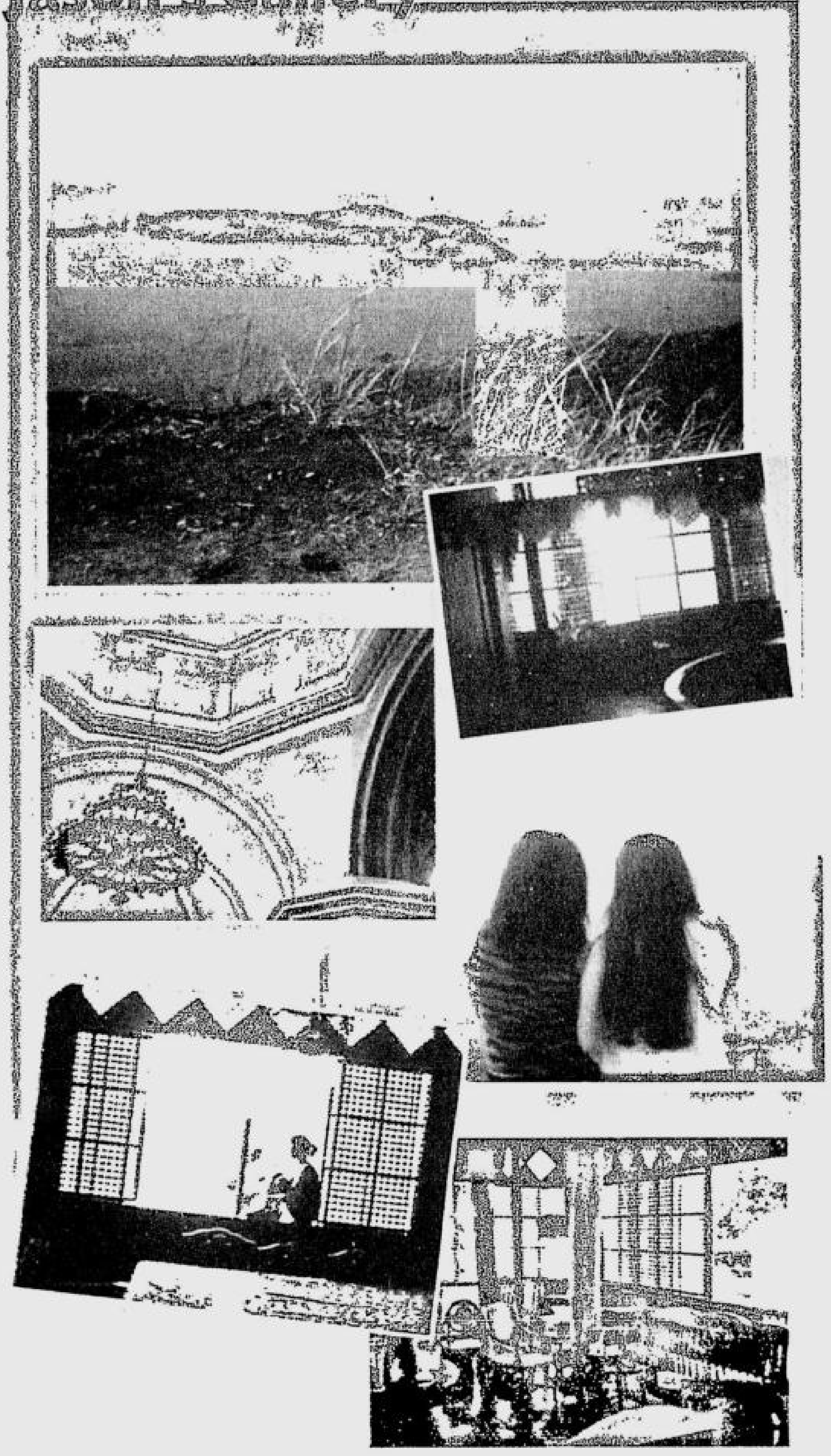
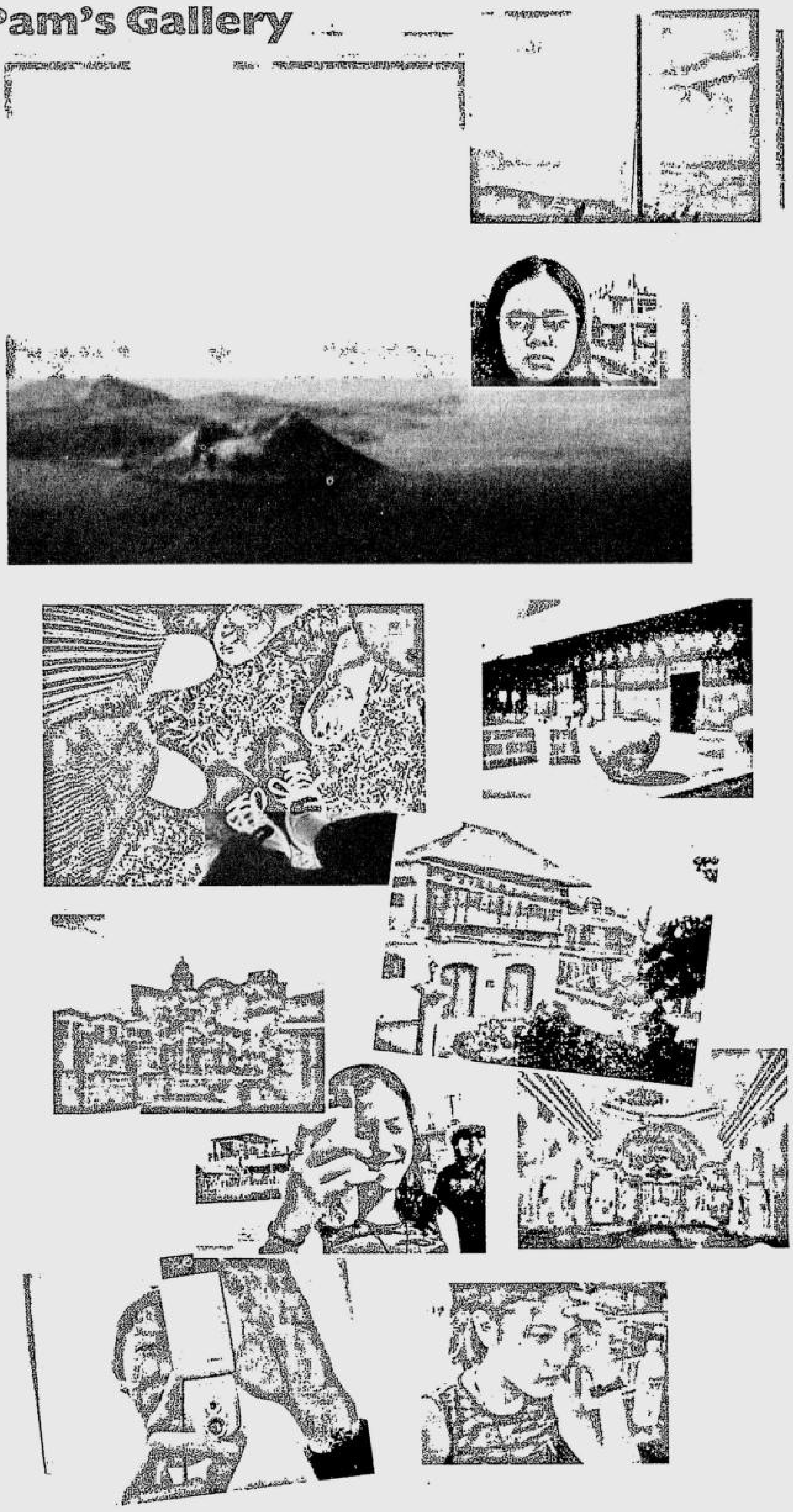
Shooting spree

Since our neolithic phones don't have cameras, we went snapshot-happy with the Ericsson T310's Communicam. Check out our fave shots that look even more fab on print than on a teeny cellphone screen!

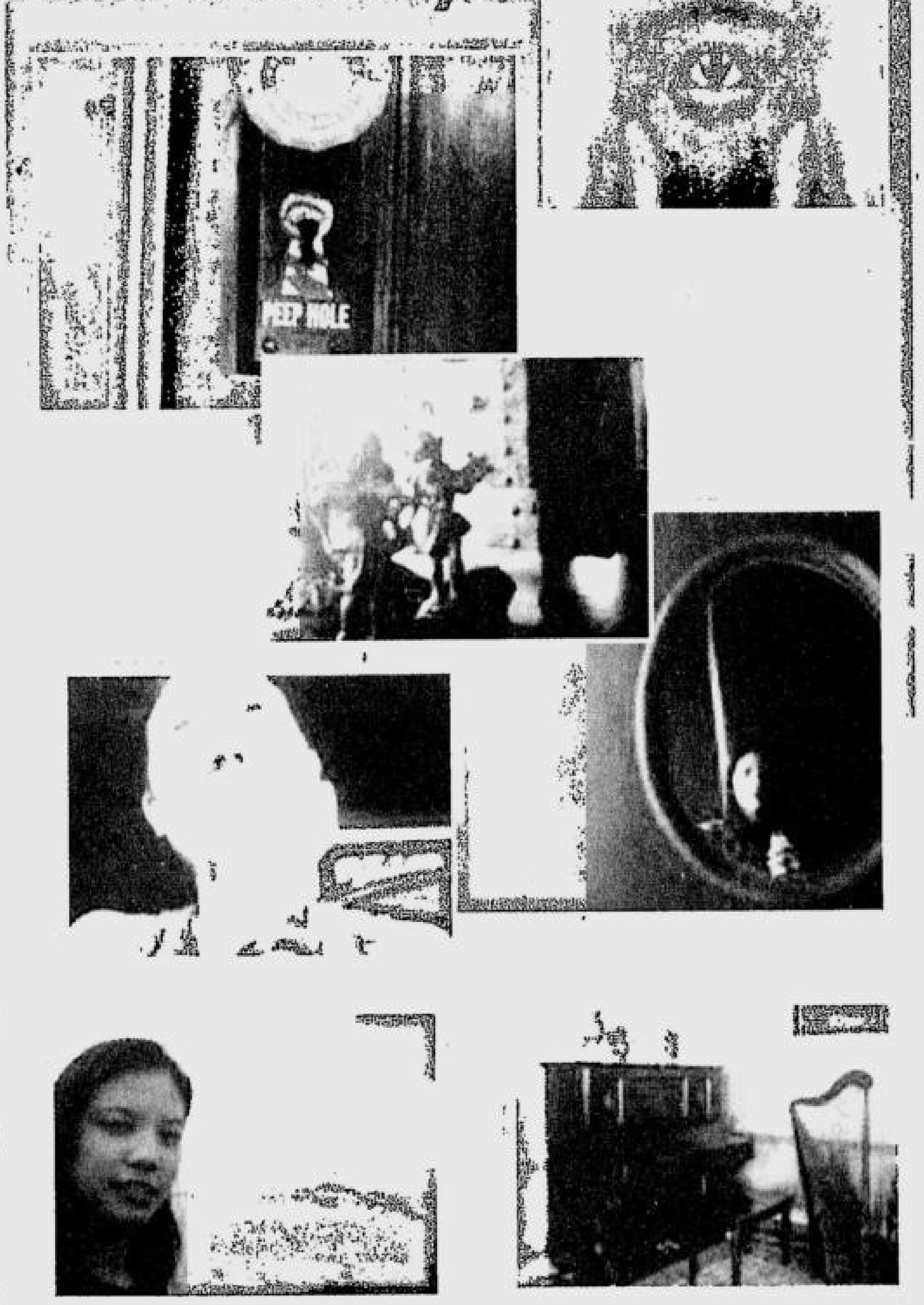
Jason's Gallery



Pam's Gallery



Maui's Gallery



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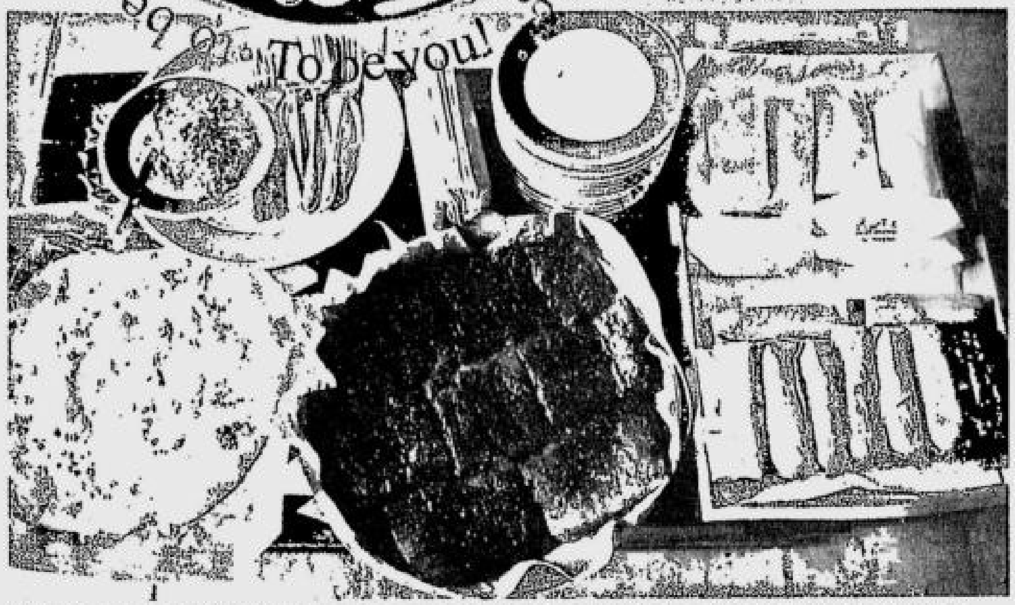

MID-MORNING FEAST at Casa Punzalan. *Maja blanca*, *bibingka*, *suman* and "pancit in the bread"

A foodie's Taal

By Pam Pastor

PROVINCIAL fiestas are known for the abundance of food in every home. Visitors from all over house-hop and get their fill of local delicacies. It is a dance of sorts—of hospitality and

A FOODIE'S/ D2

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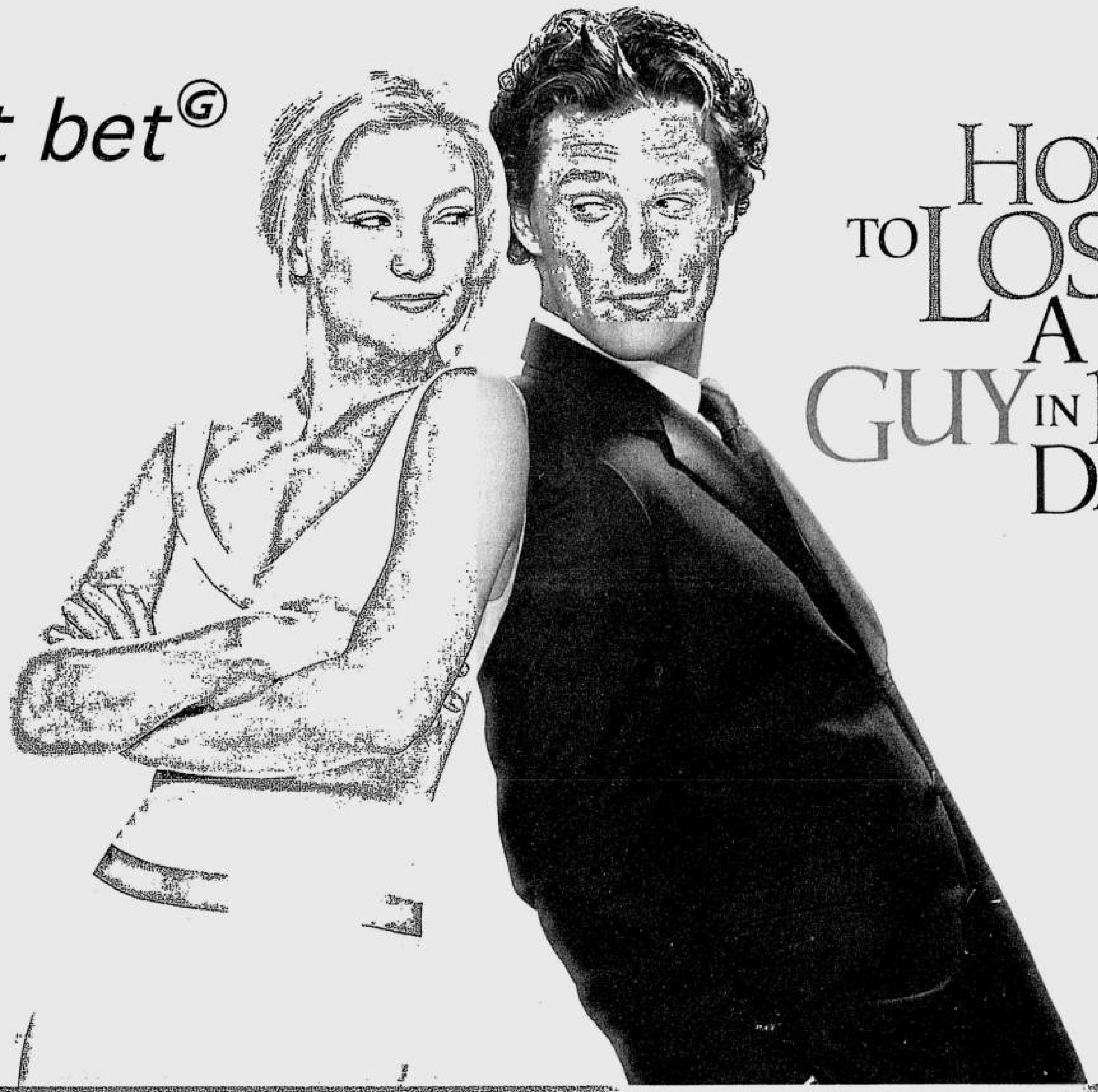
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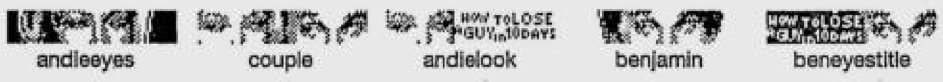
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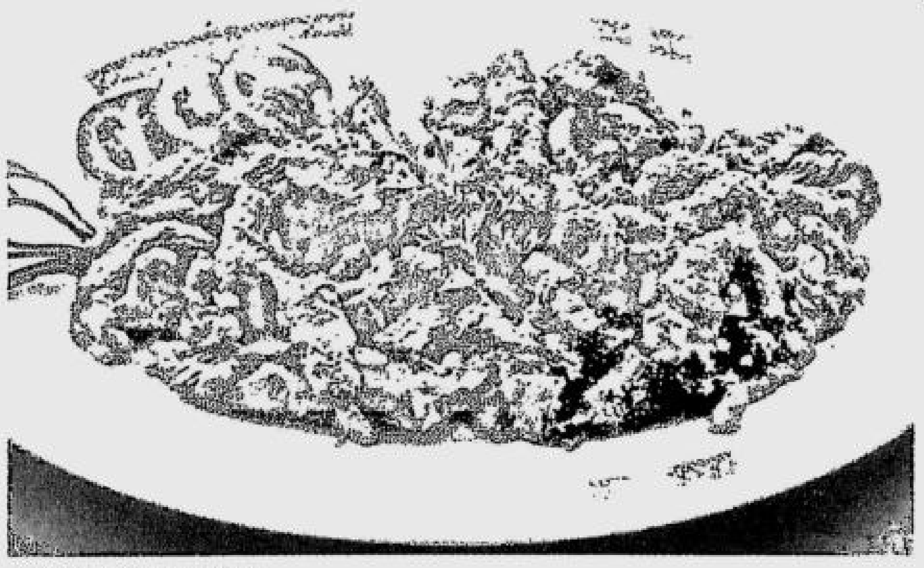
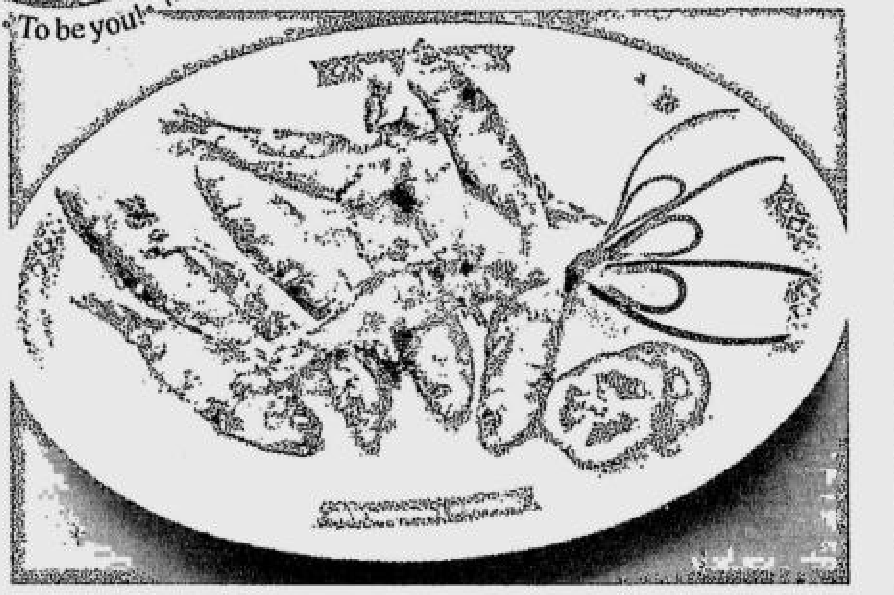
A foodie's Taal

From page D1



BEEF Tapa from Leslie's



TAWILIS from Taal Lake at Leslie's

blurred boundaries, of giving and taking, of sharing and acceptance.

The day we went to Taal, there was no fiesta. But we received enough warmth and hospitality to make us feel as if we were in the middle of one.

We tried new dishes, familiar treats with new twists and old goodies that suddenly seemed new.

Taal isn't just a place rich in history. It is also home to delicious, mouth-watering food.

First stop was Leslie's in Tagaytay, an open-aired restaurant that offered a breathtaking view of the Taal Volcano. Our table faced the picturesque sight. We drank in nature's beauty while we enjoyed a breakfast of *tawilis*, beef *tapa*, mushroom and red pepper omelet, garlic rice, hot chocolate and coffee.

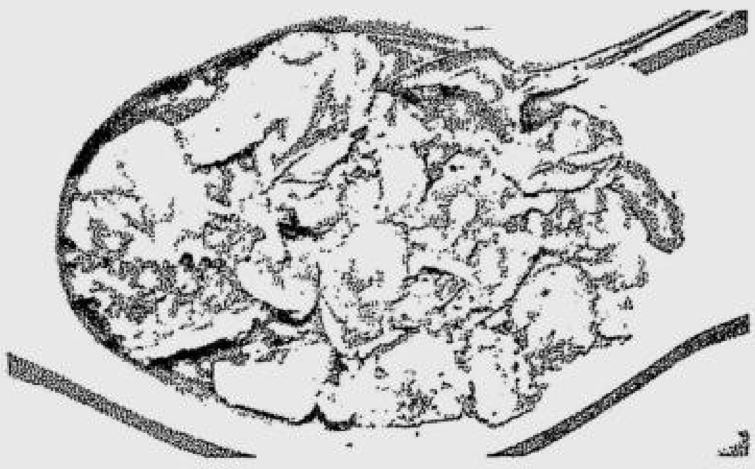
The *tawilis*, which came from Taal Lake, was dipped in flour before being fried. It was fresh and crisp and went perfectly with the garlic rice. The beef *tapa* was moist and flavorful—it almost had the consistency of beefsteak. The mushroom and red pepper omelet was light and fluffy, and provided the balance for our meal.

After the meal and after taking countless pictures of the volcano, we left and continued our journey to Taal.

> The historic town with a breathtaking view of the world's smallest but very active volcano is an eruption of tastes and colors

Great delicacies

We were welcomed by Dindo Alvarez Montenegro, Taal's cultural officer. He brought us to Casa Punzalan, a delightful old house that had been transformed into a hotel. We were introduced to women who volunteered to take care of the hotel in their spare time.



ADOBONG Taal cooked with yellow ginger

Dindo said, "Before we begin, we offer you some refreshments so you can become familiar with the local delicacies."

It was only then that I saw the spread they had prepare for us on a low table. *Suman*, *bibingka*, *maja blanca* and *empanadas* beckoned to us from their platters. We were still full from breakfast to have a mid-morning snack but one must never shun hospitality. We had no choice but to give in.

The *suman*, *bibingka* and *maja blanca* were the perfect combination of sweetness and stickiness. The *empanada* was something else entirely. *Colegialas* who have visited Taal have named it "pancit in the bread" precisely because the *empanada* crust is filled with *pancit*. It has little meat and vegetable bits and has a very slight peppery taste. It sounds curious on paper but the tastes actually blended well.

After watching different people work on different crafts—from embroidery and weaving to *panutsa* and *balisong*-making, it was time for lunch.

Lunch was at Dindo's ancestral home. The meal had been prepared by his sister. Their long dining table was covered with dishes of *adobong* Taal, two kinds of *bulanglang*, *tilapia*, *tapang* Taal, *sinaing na tulingan*, *achara*, *bagoong* and *hilaw na mangga*.

HALO-HALO from Ester's Sari-Sari Store

Adobong Taal is unlike any other *adobo* I've tried before. The pieces of pork and chicken are bright yellow, the sauce almost "Stabilo yellow," as Maui said. It is the yellow ginger that gives this dish its bright hue. The taste isn't very different though, it's just a little more sour, like the meat had really absorbed the vinegar.

Taste of heaven

The *bulanglang* is basically rice water cooked with a mixture of vegetables like papayas and banana blossoms. The soup tastes almost like *sinigang*. It's a good way to balance an otherwise very rich meal.

The *tilapia*, which was very fresh, was cooked without the use of charcoal. It was broiled on coconut husks. The *sinaing* na *tulingan*, a fish that comes from the tuna family, was equally fresh and tasty.

The *tapang* Taal was my favorite. Apparently, you can buy them already marinated from market stalls. It was garlicky, tender and bursting with flavor.

Dindo's sister swears that kids live on that and rice. I wouldn't mind doing the same.

The meal ended with a very traditional dessert—bananas in sweet syrup with *pinipig* on top.

After lunch, we toured ancestral homes. Sooner than soon, it was time for *merienda*.

Dindo brought us to a small store right by the side of a street—Ester's Sari-Sari Store in Tatlong Maria, Taal (right in front of the Balisong Basketball Court) to have *halo-halo*.

Every order is a generous serving of *halo-halo*, a treat complete with homemade *leche flan*, *ube* and a lot of *pinipig*. The *halo-halo* did more than just refresh me. Eating it under a tree while watching children play on the street brought me back to the summers of my childhood. Not bad at all for P15.

Dindo also wanted us to try what he calls "Taal's Chips Ahoy." These are crisp biscuits made from coconut milk that I loved. And, unbelievably, each small pack costs only P2.

The people from Taal speak of their food and delicacies with so much pride. Their desire to share it with anyone who merely sets foot on their town's grounds mirrors their pride for their culture and heritage.

And it is not surprising at all. Because indeed, they have a lot to be proud of.

I'd go back. Even just for the food.

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph

Arts and crafts in Taal

By Maui V. Reyes
2bU! Correspondent

A VISIT to a *panutsa* factory was one of the delightful stops in our Taal tour. Even though I'm not a big fan of peanuts, I'm not one to turn down the sugar-coated Taal delicacy. I was excited to see how it was made.

I had expected to see a small factory with workers, but what I saw was something different. There were about 10 people in a makeshift garage, five women sitting on low wooden chairs, beating newly made *panutsa* on a low, long wooden table. A man stood by a corner, stirring melted sugar and peanuts in a "tulyasi" (a small vat), which was heated by a dome-type stone stove fueled by coconut husks.

Dindo, our tour guide, told us the history of the *panutsa*. Originally called "panucha," it used to consist of only raw sugar. Although peanuts were later added to the basic ingredients—which are sugar, water, and citric acid as a preservative—the process of cooking it is basically still the same. All you need are coconut husks (since firewood is too expensive), a stone stove, a *tulyasi* and a long bamboo for stirring.

> The town is well known for centuries-old folk crafts, such as 'panutsa' cooking, 'balisong'-making, and exquisite embroidery

After stirring in the peanuts, the mixture is tested if it's ready to be molded. Jason gamely tried it out, but his effort only seemed to slow the work down (you need to work very fast, since the mixture tends to harden quick).

The mixture is then poured into bamboo rings, so it hardens into perfect circles. The circles are beaten by bamboo sticks to even them out.

GET IT WHILE IT'S HOT. At the *balisong* factory

THE FIRST of three steps in making Burdang Taal

I tried making a circle with a medium bamboo circle. I was not that bad, although the beating was quite tricky because the mixture would harden so fast that it started to stick to the bamboo sticks.

Pam dared me to make a 2bU! logo out of the mixture since I always seemed to do that whenever we went out on trips. I began to think the lady next to me was irritated—I was using up so much *panutsa* mixture and I couldn't work fast enough to smoothen out the letters.

Dindo stressed that *panutsa* workers earn less than minimum wage, but don't complain much about it. "As long as they get enough to get by in life, they're fine with it," he explained. "As they say here, *kahit pang-kape lang*."

Making like Rambo

Our next stop was a *balisong* factory. I'm not a big fan of weapons, and Dindo told me that Taal is trying to erase the *balisong*'s image as a deadly weapon. In fact, he said, the knives are being used in the locals' everyday lives, such as circumcision.

"You're a chicken if you don't go through that ritual with the *balisong*," Dindo laughed.

We approached the shed were men were pounding on steel and sharpening tools. I learned that a certain Perfecto de Leon came up with the *balisong*, which literally means "broken (from *bali*) manner of packing (song)," in 1905. It was patterned after the Chinese folding fan, with the knife hidden in between the handles. Others call it the "butterfly knife."

The blade of the *balisong*, which comes in different shapes and sizes, are usually taken from old steel, since it is proven to be more durable.

The first few *balisongs'* handles were made of deer horn. When deer were hunted for game and decoration, *balisong* makers resorted to carabaos, then later, horse bones.

Dindo told me that there are no scheduled huntings or slaughterings in order to make a knife.

"But since there's demand for meat, sometimes readily available in public market, then the trimmings make way too for other purposes (like *balisong*- making)," he said.

There are many different kinds of *balisongs*... from the standard "dibuyod" (used for circumcision and shaving), to the popular Rambo blade.

"It wasn't really called the 'Rambo' blade," Dindo said. "It was (called) that after the movie [Rambo] came out."

Embroidered finery

The last stop before lunch: an embroidery casa.

It was a house—literally. The women were huddled together, talking among themselves.

When they were told that we were there to write a story for the paper, they got up and grabbed the cotton sheets they were working on.

The three women, I was told, were doing the three different steps in making a Burdang Taal. The first was the *burda*, your standard vertical sewing of a pattern. The second was the *bakbak*, where one removed the thread of the cloth horizontally, and the third was the *calado*, wherein the mesh made by the second stage was reinforced by even more thread.

I was most impressed by the *calado* stage. The old woman almost made the needle dance over the cloth, I couldn't seem to make out how she sewed up a row so fast.

Dindo said embroidery came to Taal when a Bornean royal, Datu Balensusa (later dubbed "Balensutla"), loved silk so much that he sewed his own clothes in silk. The designs, called "sinuksok," impressed the locals of Taal.

I MADE THAT! I really did! The author with her masterpiece

OLD steel is best when making knives.

A WEAVER at the *balisong* factory

During the American period, however, five women who had been sent to Manila to learn embroidery later returned to teach the locals how to work with a needle and some thread. American baby dresses would be brought to Taal, and the women would copy the designs and patterns.

I asked Dindo the difference between the Lumabawin Laguna embroidery and the Burdang Taal is. He told me that Taal embroidery has an "embossed" effect, giving it three-dimensional look.

The women didn't seem to be fazed about the hard work they were doing. I was later told that they saw it as a hobby, a means to pass the time and catch up with friends and family, aside, of course, from a means of earning a living.

"Sometimes when their boss pays them little, the quality of the product suffers," Dindo said. "It's hard for them. It takes them a month to finish a tablecloth, and they get paid around a P150 while the tablecloth goes for P2,000."

I couldn't help but think of the many men and women who work so hard in Taal and get paid so little and yet seem to maintain an optimistic outlook in life. To them, work is just a means to earn some money in order to get by with what they really need in life—an excuse to have something to do during the day, to spend time with their families and friends, while keeping the culture of Taal alive, which is something I greatly admire.

Jewelry house sponsors special screening

BULGARI will hold an invitational advance screening of the movie "How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days" tonight at 7:30 at the Cinema 1, Greenbelt 3.

The film features Kate Hudson and Matthew McConaughey in a romantic comedy.

It tells the story of Andie (Hudson), a fashion magazine writer assigned to write an article on what turns men off.

In search of a male writing subject, she meets Ben (McConaughey), an advertising man who is trying to win a bet by making a woman fall in love with him in record time.

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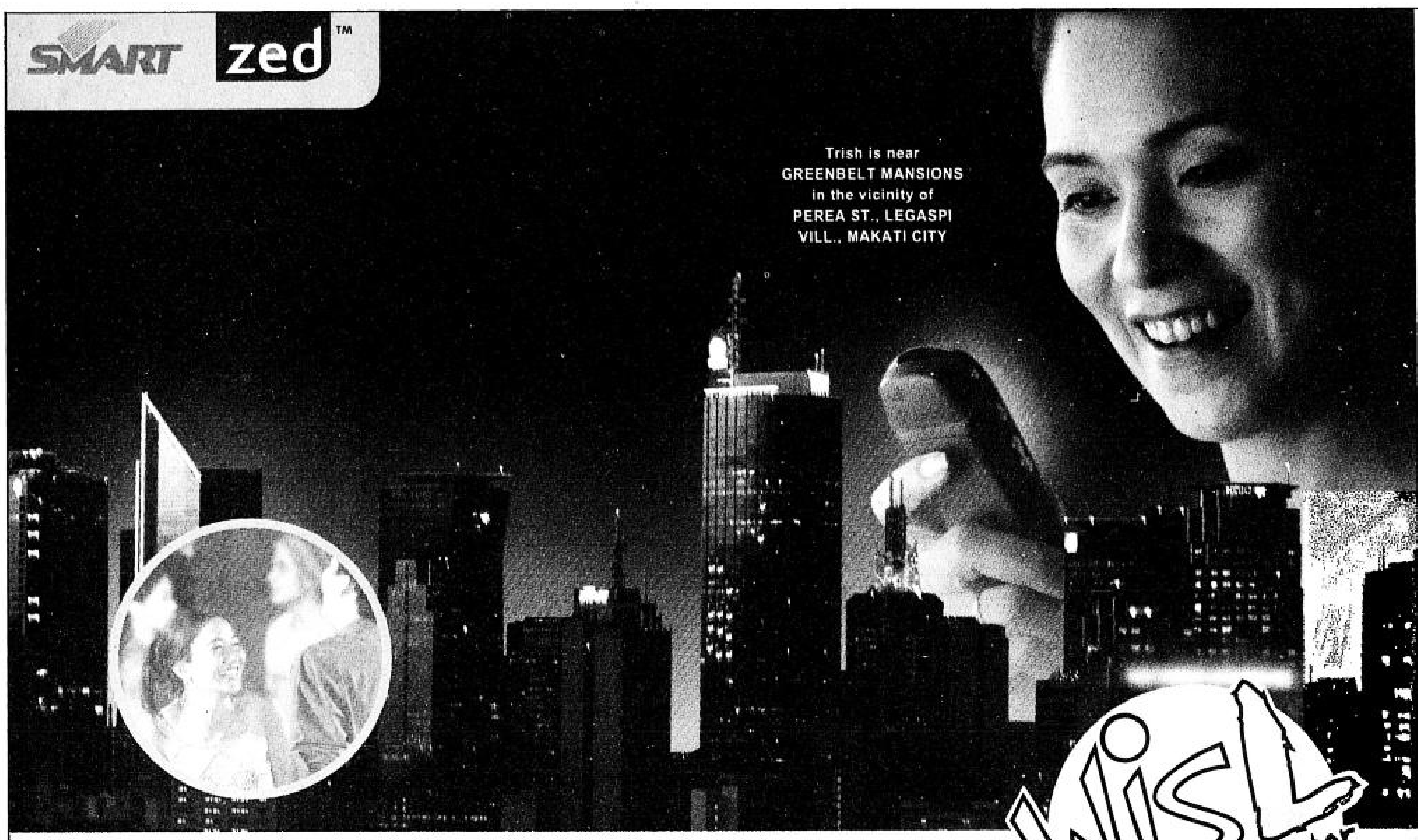

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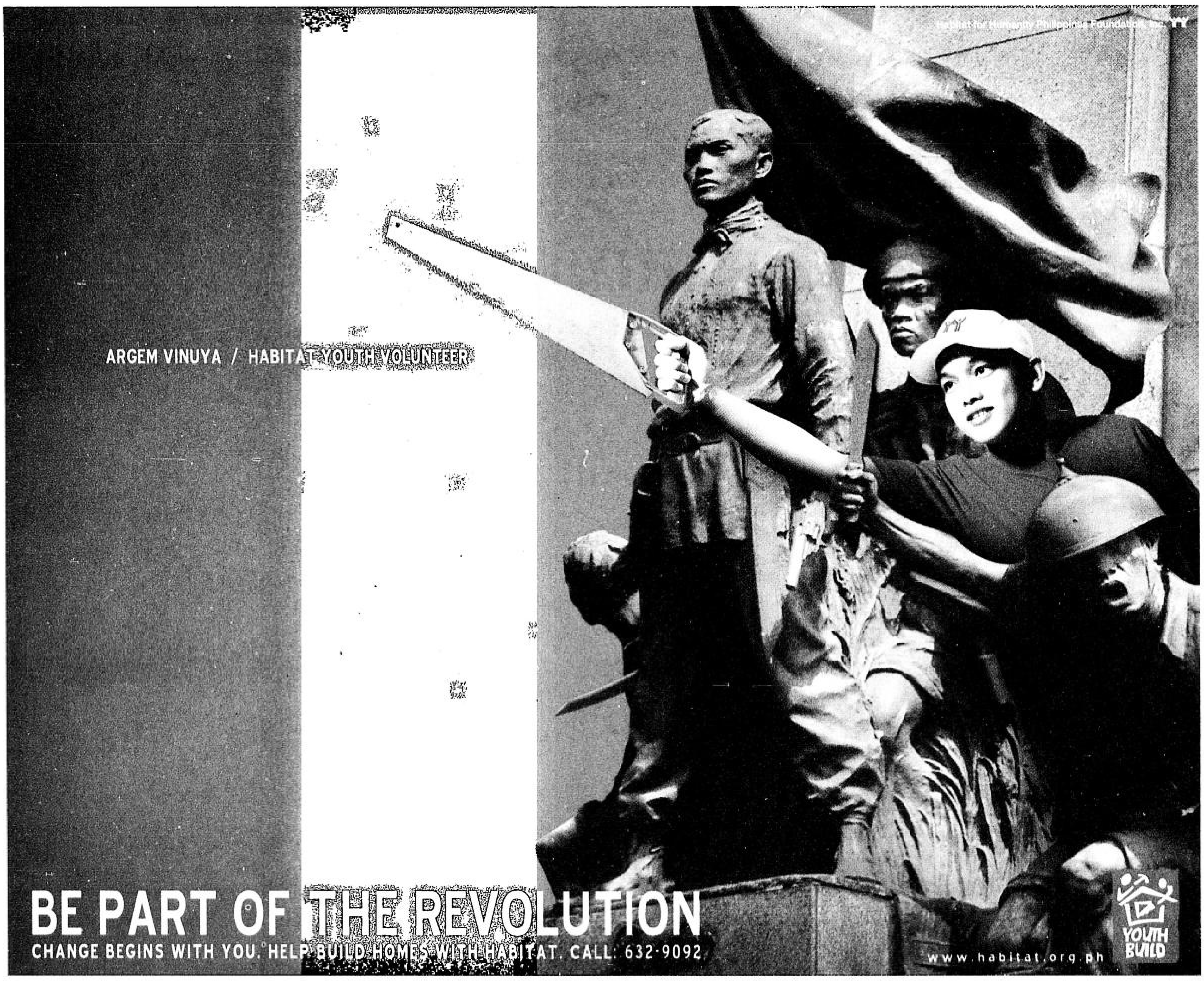
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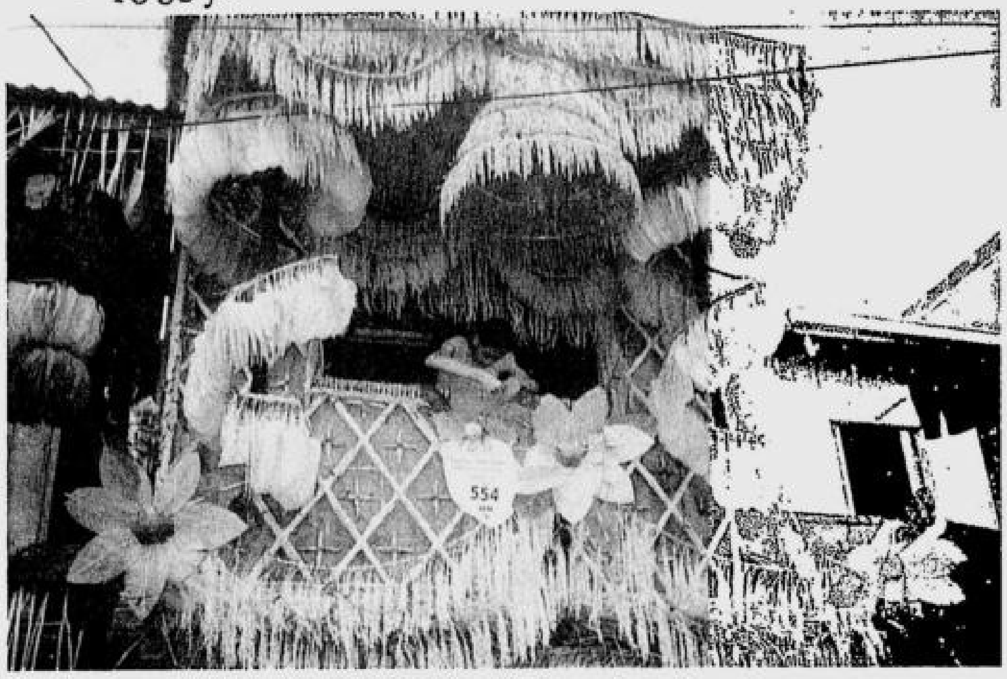


IS THAT YOUR FINAL TOUCH? Little girl and her last-minute alterations

PICTURE-PERFECT PAHIYAS

Text and photos by Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

One needs to have an ample stock of film and good batteries when attending the Lucban fiesta

IN RECENT years, people have criticized the Pahiyas festival of Lucban for being too commercial and superficial. But whether those criticisms are true or not, there is no denying that the Pahiyas festival is more vivid and intense than ever, and people still flock to it.

THE FARMER'S not in the plaza. A mannequin makes sure his crops are well taken care of.

An air-conditioned vehicle may be comfy but it's not the best way to experience the Pahiyas. Aside from the horrendous traffic, you miss the chance to see superb sights up close.

Being stuck in a car will also hinder you from checking out how truly commercialized the celebration has become. Many stalls sell assorted stuff, from homemade goodies to more popular products. The more popular with the crowd were those that offered free tastes and free samples.

There were *tiangges* and stands right outside the heavily adorned houses selling a variety of items like the expected Pahiyas-printed shirts, baskets, hats, sweets and the famous *longganisa*.

But shopping is secondary when one goes to Lucban for the Pahiyas. The festival's main attractions are still the dressed-up houses, most of them truly deserving of being captured by your camera.

Whether your camera is automatic, digital or video, souvenir shots are a must. Some people impatiently wait for a perfect frame, while others just click away. Some insist to be in a shot, while others are content to just take pictures.

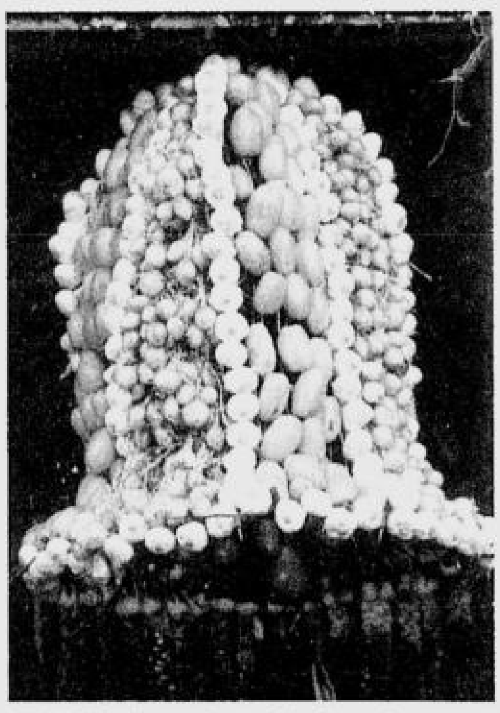
Even if the houses end up as just backdrop in the photographs, everybody knows they're the stars of the show with the ornamentation that they use.

Challenging

The residents' creativity is put to a test during Pahiyas. Aside from having to come up with a design completely different from those in the past, there is also the ever-present challenge to make the decor extra-special enough to stand out among a sea of distinctive houses.

For example, although rice stalks and colorful *kiping* are usually used, some residents created giant flowers and chandeliers made of *kiping*, and used uncommon patterns in hanging the *kiping* to be unique. One house even used Christmas colors.

Other farm produce had their share of the limelight.



VEGGIE bell sounds good, looks and tastes even better. RAYMOND SALDAÑA

Pineapples were widely used as decoration, including two gigantic versions. One was made of *bao ng niyog*, while the other utilized real pineapples.

Clumps of bananas were very visible, too. Eggplants were made into chandeliers. Chili peppers were painstakingly strung into window blinds.

Since San Isidro Labrador is the patron saint of farmers and laborers, mannequins and scarecrows were dressed up in jumpers,

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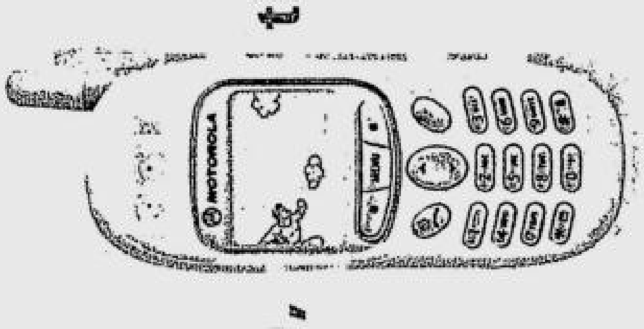


MOTOROLA T190
- Long text messaging up to 765 characters
- Group Messaging up to 10 pals simultaneously
- GSM Dualband 900 & 1800 MHz
- Send and Download Ring Tones
- 25 Animated Icons
- 3 Fun Games: Boxworld, Tetris & Snake
- Available in Eskimo White, Prussian Blue, Frosted Blue, and Frosted Green colors

Available at: ComWorks, Inc. CellStar [illegible]

For further inquiries, e-mail: cellphones.ph@mot.com or call Hotline (Toll Free) 1-800-16510418

MOTOROLA intelligence everywhere

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

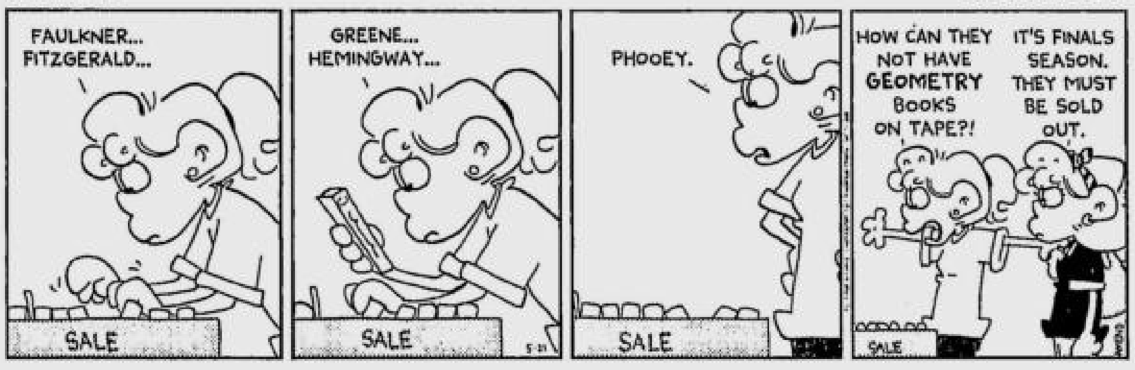
ComicRelief

e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph

WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 2003

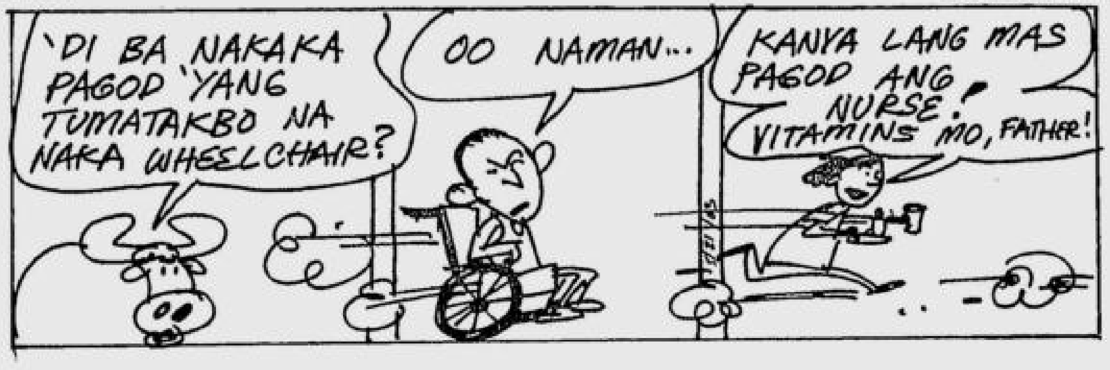
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


FAULKNER... FITZGERALD...
SALE
GREENE... HEMINGWAY...
SALE
5-21
PHOOEY.
SALE
HOW CAN THEY NOT HAVE GEOMETRY BOOKS ON TAPE?!
IT'S FINALS SEASON. THEY MUST BE SOLD OUT.
SALE

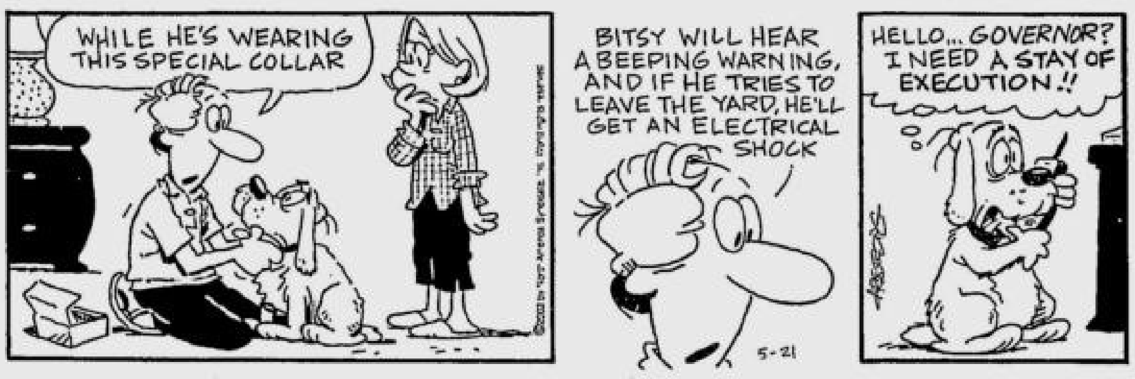
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


'DI BA NAKAKA PAGOD 'YANG TUMATAKBO NA NAKA WHEELCHAIR?
OO NAMAN...
KANYA LANG MAS PAGOD ANG NURSE!
VITAMINS MO, FATHER!

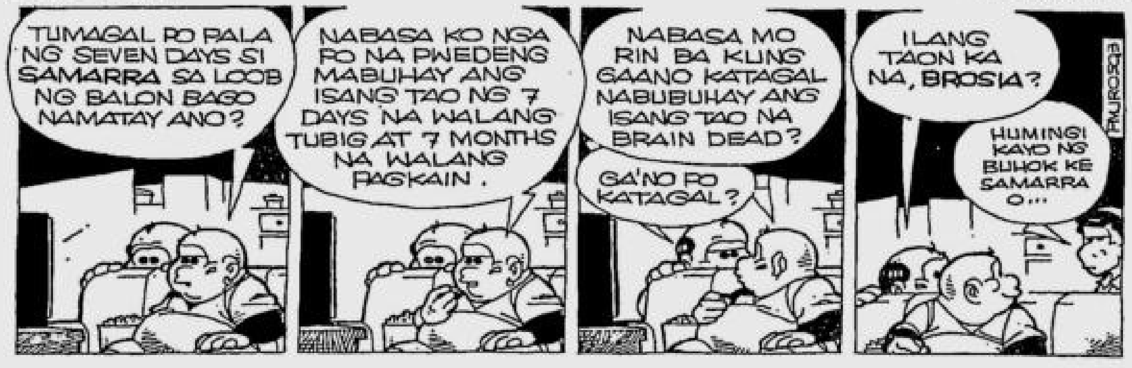
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


WHILE HE'S WEARING THIS SPECIAL COLLAR
BITSY WILL HEAR A BEEPING WARNING, AND IF HE TRIES TO LEAVE THE YARD, HE'LL GET AN ELECTRICAL SHOCK
5-21
HELLO... GOVERNOR? I NEED A STAY OF EXECUTION!!

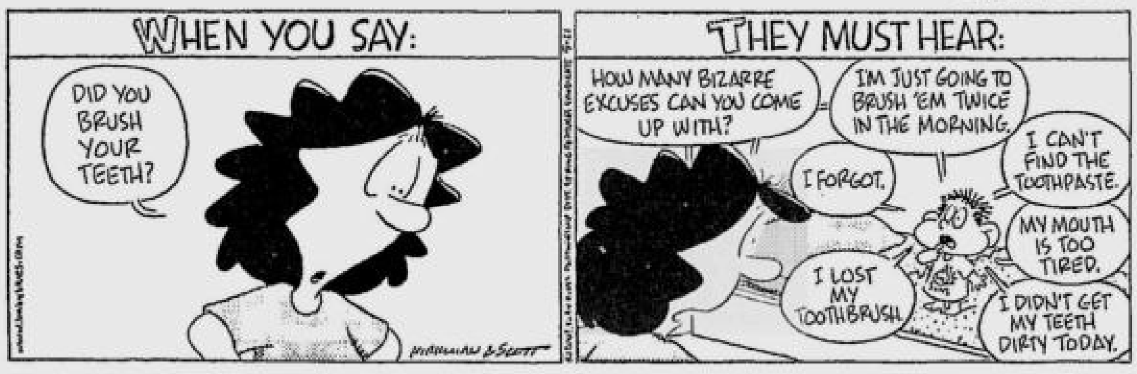
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


TUMAGAL PO PALA NG SEVEN DAYS SI SAMARRA SA LOOB NG BALON BAGO NAMATAY ANO?
NABASA KO NGA PO NA PWEDENG MABUHAY ANG ISANG TAO NG 7 DAYS NA WALANG TUBIG AT 7 MONTHS NA WALANG PAGKAIN.
NABASA MO RIN BA KUNG GAANO KATAGAL NABUBUHAY ANG ISANG TAO NA BRAIN DEAD?
GA'NO PO KATAGAL?
ILANG TAON KA NA, BROSIA?
HUMINGI KAYO NG BUHOK KE SAMARRA O...
PMJR0503

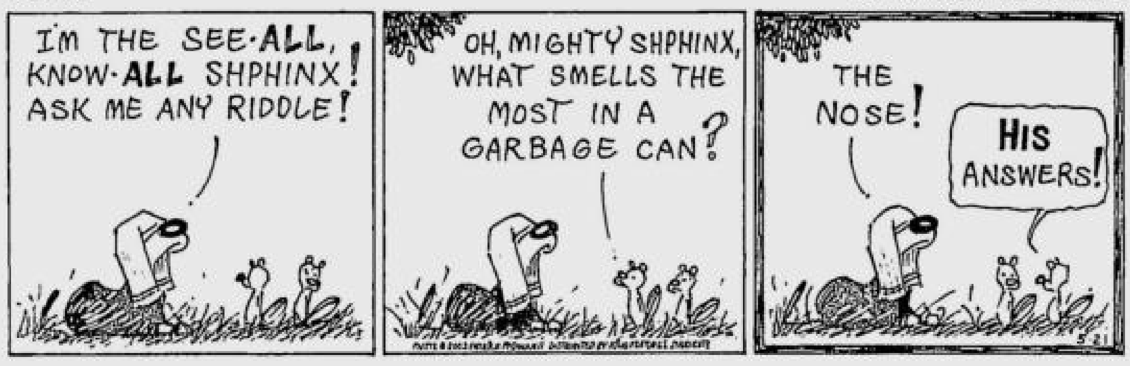
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WHEN YOU SAY:
DID YOU BRUSH YOUR TEETH?
THEY MUST HEAR:
HOW MANY BIZARRE EXCUSES CAN YOU COME UP WITH?
I'M JUST GOING TO BRUSH 'EM TWICE IN THE MORNING.
I CAN'T FIND THE TOOTHPASTE.
I FORGOT.
MY MOUTH IS TOO TIRED.
I LOST MY TOOTHBRUSH.
I DIDN'T GET MY TEETH DIRTY TODAY.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

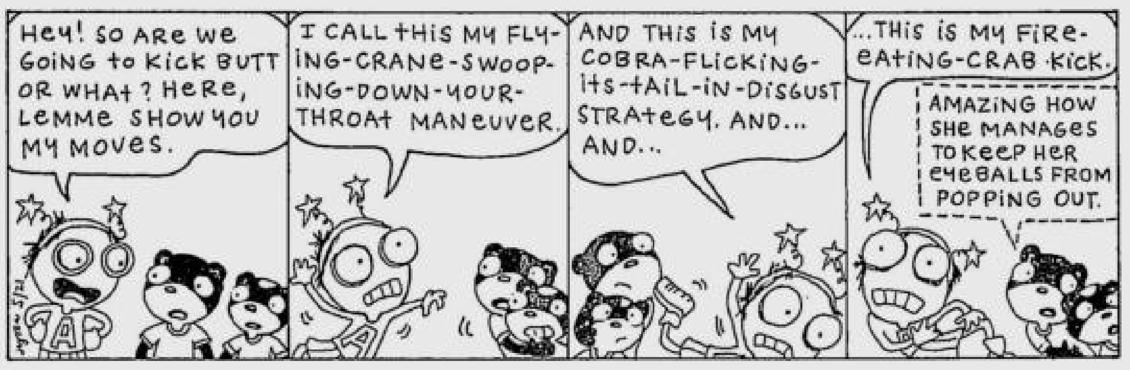
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


I'M THE SEE-ALL, KNOW-ALL SHPHINX! ASK ME ANY RIDDLE!
OH, MIGHTY SHPHINX, WHAT SMELLS THE MOST IN A GARBAGE CAN?
THE NOSE!
HIS ANSWERS!
5-21

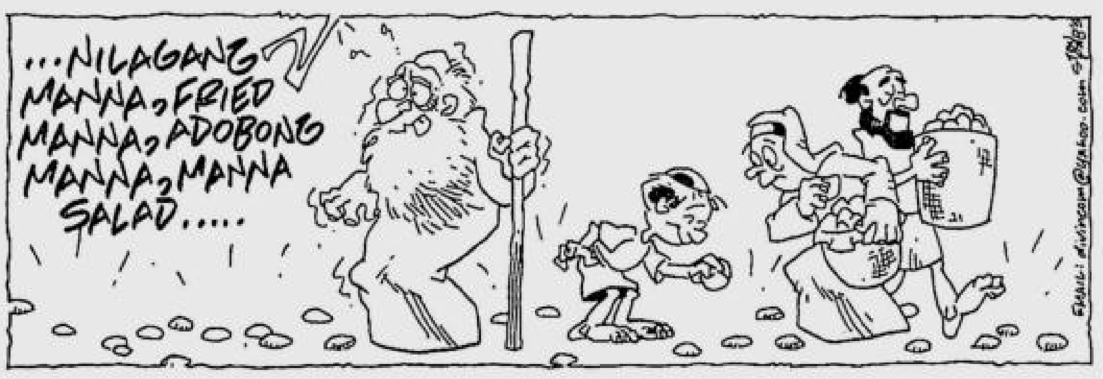
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey! so are we going to kick butt or what? Here, lemme show you my moves.
I call this my flying-crane-swooping-down-your-throat maneuver.
And this is my cobra-flicking-its-tail-in-disgust strategy. And... and...
...This is my fire-eating-crab kick.
Amazing how she manages to keep her eyeballs from popping out.

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


...NILAGANG MANNA, FRIED MANNA, ADOBONG MANNA, MANNA SALAD.....

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: Without question, you are brave and courageous. You face whatever has to be done, and you do it. Because of this, you are an inspiration to others. You are always willing to roll up your sleeves and tackle what needs to be done. You are capable of great accomplishments. Your hard work this year will bring you rewards in 2004. Birthdate of: Judge Reinhold, actor; Fairuza Balk, actress; Fats Waller, jazz musician.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Fasten your seat belt. Starting today and for the next four weeks, expect to be busy with appointments, shopping, short trips, and increased activity with relatives and siblings.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): There is something you want to buy now. Perhaps it is something you can show off? If you can swing it, do it. (You love beautiful things.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This is your time to recharge your batteries for the rest of the year. With the Sun in your sign, you will attract people and favorable opportunities to you now and in the weeks to come.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You need quiet time to be all by yourself. So much has been happening lately, you need an opportunity to pull your act together before you take it on the road. Do this for yourself.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): A popular month ahead! Get ready to schmooze with friends and be more involved with groups, clubs and organizations. Discuss your goals with others.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): With the Sun at high noon in your chart, others notice you now! Do not refuse extra responsibilities—you will handle them beautifully. (I kid you not.)

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Your desire to travel and to escape from your daily routine is very strong now. Make plans today to slip away somewhere and do something. (You won't regret it.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is the time to turn your concentration to bills, debt, taxes, shared property and joint holdings. Focus on your responsibilities to others.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Our friends are often an accurate reflection of who we are. With the Sun opposite your sign now, your closest relationships will give you an opportunity to learn more about yourself.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Do at least three things today that can help you get better organized both at work and at home. This will trigger three more things tomorrow—hopefully.

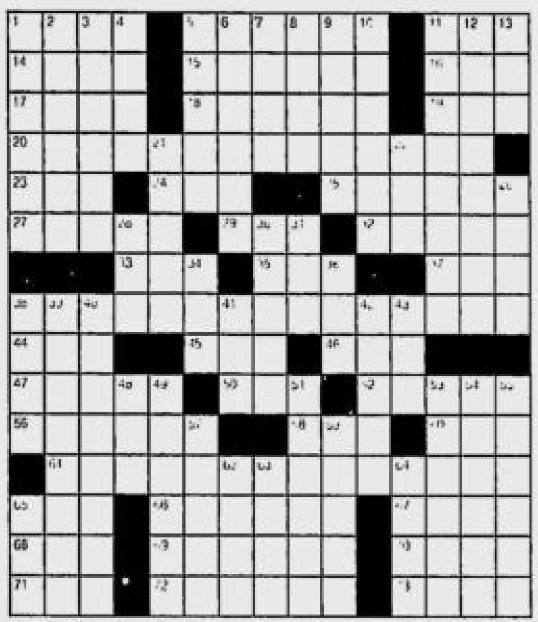
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Love, romance and flirtations are in the air! New relationships can begin now, while existing partnerships become sweeter. Your creative drive is strong in the month ahead.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Home and family are a top priority now. Domestic functions and family get-togethers please you. Buy a little gift for a family member.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Watch pockets
5 Old town of Algiers
11 __ de mer
14 "__ from Muskogee"
15 Sealed vial
16 Make a choice
17 Cool-headed
18 Merciful captor
19 Gangster's pistol
20 Sawmill factions?
23 Golf-ball position
24 Opposite of 'neath
25 Body suits
27 Fragrant compound
29 Grab a bite
32 Santiago's country
33 Sloppy digs
35 Hoops tourney
37 Jersey cager
38 Victory on the court?
44 Howdy-dos
45 Zilch
46 Ghostly comment
47 Take back one's words
50 Cutesy ending
52 Emotional tones
56 Sibling's daughters
58 __ v. Wade
60 Demure
61 Start digging?
65 Strike
66 Net fisherman
67 __ Bator, Mongolia
68 Just make do
69 Get goose bumps
70 Fill to the brim
71 Lipstick shade
72 Traffic tie-ups
73 Lowish card

DOWN
1 Seamen's quarters
2 Giraffes' kin
3 Soldier's lodging
4 18-wheeler
5 Social peer group
6 Current unit
7 Go a few rounds
8 Hamlet
9 On one's toes
10 Brave
11 Strong sedative
12 Followers of Jesus
13 Old Ford model
21 Santa's pole
22 Word of disgust
26 Tennis units
28 Tee preceder
30 __-Saxon
31 Frank McCourt bestseller
34 __ and yang
36 Rust bucket
38 Cold-shoulder
39 Little putt-putt
40 Made a point
41 Puppy bite
42 One on the way up
43 Bill and __
48 Poker bullet
49 Leavening agents
51 "Homage to Catalonia" author
53 Of the eye
54 Offer free
55 Australia's largest city
57 Flock of geese
59 Grimm nasties
62 1492 ship
63 MIT grad
64 Depose
65 "Tell Laura I Love __."



By Jim Page
New York, NY

5/21/03

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

D	E	B	A	R	■	B	A	E	R	■	I	D	E	A
A	L	A	M	O	■	O	T	T	O	■	L	U	L	L
D	O	N	T	B	L	A	M	E	I	T	O	N	M	E
E	N	D	■	B	O	Z	O	S	■	R	I	N	S	E
■	■	■	A	E	C	■	■	■	T	E	L	■	■	■
T	H	I	S	R	O	U	N	D	I	S	O	N	M	E
R	A	N	I	S	■	R	A	I	N	S	■	I	A	L
A	N	I	S	■	N	I	N	J	A	■	D	X	X	I
C	N	N	■	L	L	A	N	O	■	D	R	O	I	T
T	A	K	E	A	C	H	A	N	C	E	O	N	M	E
■	■	■	R	T	S	■	■	■	A	L	P	■	■	■
C	R	E	E	K	■	U	L	N	A	F	■	U	G	H
Y	O	U	C	A	N	C	O	U	N	T	O	N	M	E
S	O	R	T	■	F	L	A	K	■	E	A	T	E	R
T	K	O	S	■	L	A	N	E	■	D	R	O	N	E

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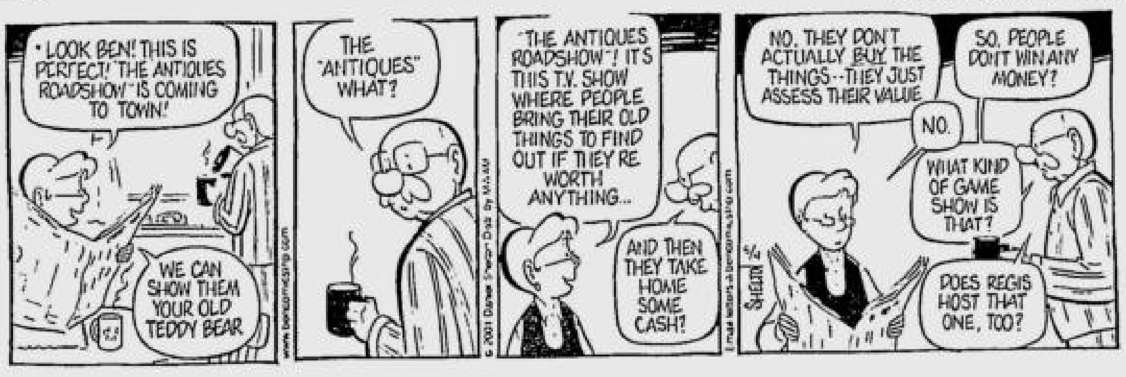
5/21/03

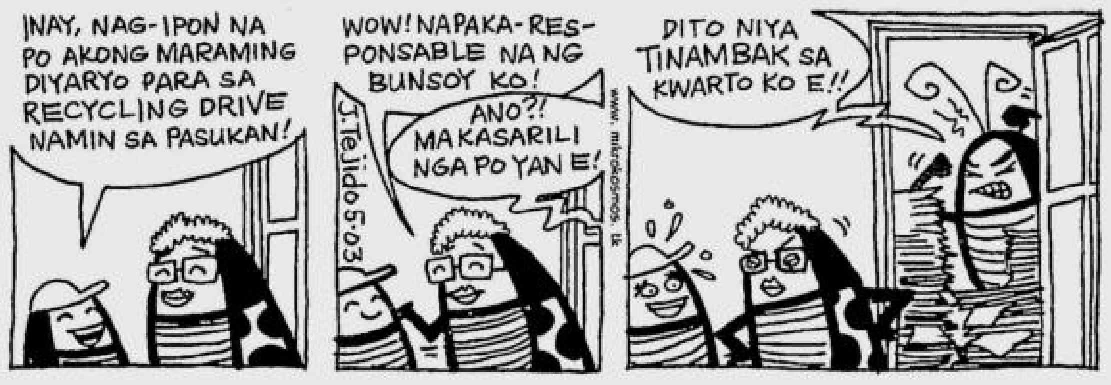
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


LOOK BEN! THIS IS PERFECT! "THE ANTIQUES ROADSHOW" IS COMING TO TOWN!
WE CAN SHOW THEM YOUR OLD TEDDY BEAR
THE "ANTIQUES" WHAT?
"THE ANTIQUES ROADSHOW"! IT'S THIS T.V. SHOW WHERE PEOPLE BRING THEIR OLD THINGS TO FIND OUT IF THEY'RE WORTH ANYTHING...
AND THEN THEY TAKE HOME SOME CASH?
NO, THEY DON'T ACTUALLY BUY THE THINGS--THEY JUST ASSESS THEIR VALUE.
SO, PEOPLE DON'T WIN ANY MONEY?
NO.
WHAT KIND OF GAME SHOW IS THAT?
DOES REGIS HOST THAT ONE, TOO?

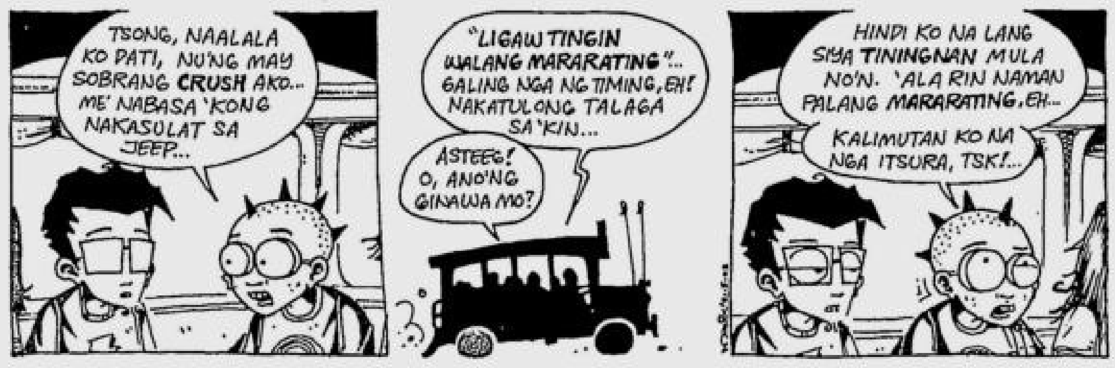
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


INAY, NAG-IPON NA PO AKONG MARAMING DIYARYO PARA SA RECYCLING DRIVE NAMIN SA PASUKAN!
WOW! NAPAKA-RESPONSABLE NA NG BUNSOY KO!
ANO?! MAKASARILI NGA PO YAN E!
J. Tejido 5-03
DITO NIYA TINAMBAK SA KWARTO KO E!!

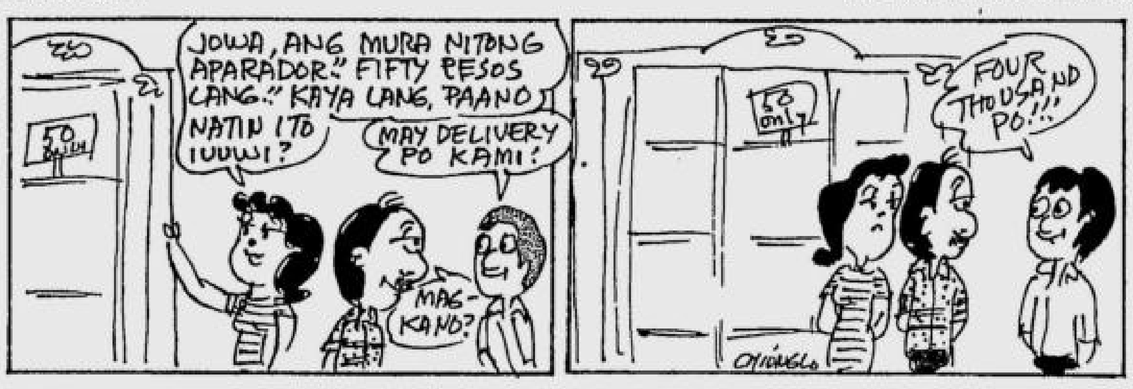
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


TSONG, NAALALA KO PATI, NU'NG MAY SOBRANG CRUSH AKO... ME' NABASA 'KONG NAKASULAT SA JEEP...
"LIGAW TINGIN WALANG MARARATING"... GALING NGA NG TIMING, EH! NAKATULONG TALAGA SA'KIN...
ASTEEG! O, ANO'NG GINAWA MO?
HINDI KO NA LANG SIYA TININGNAN MULA NO'N. 'ALA RIN NAMAN PALANG MARARATING, EH...
KALIMUTAN KO NA NGA ITSURA, TSK!...

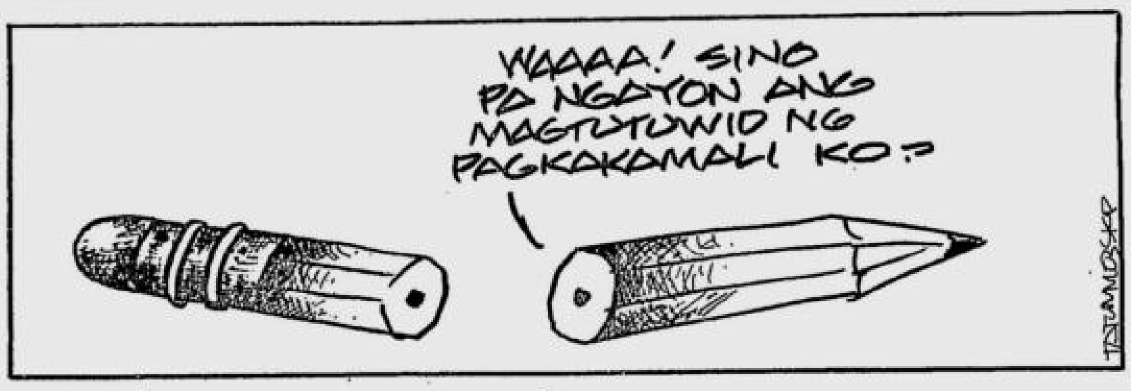
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JOWA, ANG MURA NITONG APARADOR!" FIFTY PESOS LANG!" KAYA LANG, PAANO NATIN ITO IUUWI?
MAY DELIVERY PO KAMI!
MAG-KANO?
50
FOUR THOUSAND PO!!!
50 only
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


WAAAA! SINO PA NGAYON ANG MAGTUTUWID NG PAGKAKAMALI KO?
TATUM MOSKAR

ALL DIGITAL SOUND
AYALA CINEMAS
PRESENTS

G1 GLORIETTA 1

1	WALANG KAPALIT
2	THE MATRIX RELOADED
3	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
4	RING 0

G4 GLORIETTA 4

	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	X-MEN 2
THX	GUARANTEED SEATS THE MATRIX RELOADED 1:20, 4:10, 7:00, 9:50
	THE MATRIX RELOADED
5	SO CLOSE
6	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
7	RING 0

GB1 GREENBELT 1

ArtFilm 1	AUTO FOCUS (Exclusive) 12:45, 3:00, 5:15, 7:30
2	THE MATRIX RELOADED 12:30, 3:20, 6:10, 9:00
	VIVA ACOUSTIC NIGHT FEAT. PAOLO SANTOS May 23 & 24

GB3 GREENBELT 3

THX 1	GUARANTEED SEATS THE MATRIX RELOADED 2:40 5:35 8:30 11:25
THX 2	GUARANTEED SEATS THE MATRIX RELOADED 12:55 3:50 6:45 9:40
3	GUARANTEED SEATS THE HOURS 12:50 3:15 5:40, 8:05 10:30
4	GUARANTEED SEATS HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS 11:50 2:15 4:40 9:40
5	GUARANTEED SEATS THE MATRIX RELOADED 12:20 3:15 HOW TO LOSE A GUY [illegible]

ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER

THX	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
3	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4	RING 0
5	SO CLOSE

For sreening times, call 729-7777. Movies are subject to change without prior notice. Reserve your seats by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 and send to 2333. Or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING
EMAIL: mmta@asia.com

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DOLBY)	RING -0
2 (SDDS)	SO CLOSE
3 (DTS)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4 GOLD (DTSES)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
5 GOLD	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
6 GOLD (SDDS)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
7 GOLD (DOLBY EX)	X-MEN 2
8	TILL THERE WAS YOU
9	WALANG KAPALIT
10	ANGEL SA LUPA

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1	RESERVE
2	RESERVE
3 (DTS)	RESERVE
4	RESERVE
5	RESERVE
6 (DTS)	RESERVE
Golden Pearl THX	RESERVE

Masagana CINEMA 1 2 & 3
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1	DAYO
2	THE MATRIX RELOADED
3	HIRAM

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986

1	WALANG KAPALIT
2	DAYO
3	KIKAY
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
5	HIRAM

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850.4285

1	KIKAY
2	DAYO
3	HIRAM
4	WALANG KAPALIT
5	THE MATRIX RELOADED
6	THE MATRIX RELOADED

M star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Las Pinas)
tel 873.5004

1	WALANG KAPALIT
2	

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) TEL. 8934225, 8922503
THE MATRIX RELOADED

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	TILL THERE WAS YOU
2	X- MEN-2

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL INC
tel 930.9515

1	
2	HIRAM
3	

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	HIRAM
3	DAYO
4	

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

1 (SDDS)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4	HIRAM
5	DAYO
6	ANGEL SA LUPA
7 (DTS)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
8 (SDDS)	SO CLOSE
9 (DOLBY)	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS

Gotesco Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	RESERVE

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 365.7928

1	ANGEL SA LUPA
2	WALANG KAPALIT
3	DAYO
4 (SDDS)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
5	HIRAM
6 (DOLBY)	SO CLOSE
7 (DTS)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
8	TILL THERE WAS YOU
9	KIKAY

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0082

1	WALANG KAPALIT
2 (SDDS)	SO CLOSE
3 (DTS)	ANGEL SA LUPA
4 (DOLBY)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
5	HIRAM

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	WALANG KAPALIT
2	DAYO
3 (DTS)	ANGEL SA LUPA
4	HIRAM
5 (SDDS)	THE MATRIX RELOADED

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	HIRAM

Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	DAYO

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson	HIRAM
Lords	XEREX
Jennet	RESERVE

MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	SO CLOSE
2	THE MATRIX RELOADED
3	DAYO
4	HIRAM

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	DAYO
3	ANGEL SA LUPA
4	WALANG KAPALIT
5	HIRAM

FRC Cinema
(Talaba Bacoor Cavite)

1	
2	

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	HIRAM

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT
Araneta
MALL CINEPLEX 7
tel 911.3101 loc. 821/8242/8400

1	ANGEL SA LUPA
2	DAYO
3 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	SO CLOSE
4 (SDDS)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
5 (DTS)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
6	WALANG KAPALIT
7	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS

FarmersPlaza CINEMAS
tel 911.3101 loc. 821/8242/8400

1	MATRIX
2	HIRAM

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
TEL. (049) 837-0926

1	HIRAM
2	WALANG KAPALIT
3 (DTS)	THE MATRIX RELOADED

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	THE HOURS
2 (DTS)	WALANG KAPALIT
3 (DOLBY)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	THE HOURS
2 (DOLBY)	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
3 (DTS)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4	ANGEL SA LUPA

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	WALANG KAPALIT
2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 (DOLBY)	X- MEN -2
4	

Cinema 2000 MetroTown
(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729

1	WALANG KAPALIT
2	NATIONAL SECURITY
3 (DOLBY)	A MAN APART
4 (DTS)	THE MATRIX RELOADED

Magic Star Cinema
(Tarlac City) tel (045) 611.4305

1 (DOLBY)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2 (DTS)	A MAN APART
3	WALANG KAPALIT

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR
2	HIRAM
3 (DTS)	EVA LASON KAY ADAN
4	THE MATRIX RELOADED

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
2	WALANG KAPALIT
3 (DTS)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4	HIRAM
5	BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	WALANG KAPALIT
3	HIRAM

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
3	HIRAM

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

1	NATIONAL SECURITY
2	KANGAROO JACK
3 (DTS)	WALANG KAPALIT
4 (DOLBY)	THE MATRIX RELOADED

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	
2 (DTS)	

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	KIKAY
2	WALANG KAPALIT
3	RESERVE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	WALANG KAPALIT
2	PHONE BOOTH
3	ANGER MANAGEMENT
4	THE MATRIX RELOADED

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045)887-5001 TO 03

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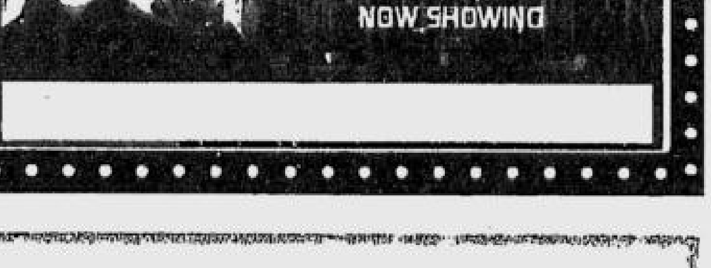

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10	TILL THERE WAS YOU

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8	THE MATRIX RELOADED

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7	MATRIX RELOADED
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Tin-Tin: Julius hasn't proposed marriage yet

JULIUS Babao and **Tin-Tin Bersola** are all agog preparing for their December wedding, which will have a magenta motif.

I recently cornered Tin-Tin and asked her, "So, how dramatic was Julius' proposal?"

The blooming bride-to-be blushed and chuckled. "Actually he hasn't formally proposed yet. If you mean the ring and all that romantic stuff. Soon, I suppose."

Among the many celebrities who'll be part of their special day are **Boy Abunda** who will do the first reading, **Gary Valenciano** who will sing "I Will be Here," and **Eddie Mercado** who will sing the couple's theme song, "The Way You Look Tonight."

Julius' elementary and high school buddies **Martin** and **Goldie** of Retrospect band will sing at the reception.

Considering how rock-solid the foundation of their love is, I must say that the marriage will never be on the rocks. With the recent marriage of **Ruffa Gutierrez** to **Yilmaz Bektas**, the engagement of **Donita Rose** to **Eric Villarama**, and Julius and Tin-Tin's coming nuptials, the show biz marriage scene is alive and well. Hopefully, these couples will usher in a new trend and start a decline in the mortality rate of celebrity marriages.

Gary's kids

GARY Estrada spent his 30th birthday quietly in his Quezon farm. Marriage has indeed mellowed him.

"I've always liked the simple life," he said. "That's why every chance I get I hie off to my farm with my wife **Berna (Bernadette Allison)** and our baby girl Garielle."

What made his birthday more than just happy is that all his kids were with him: Kiko, 10, his love child with **Cheska Diaz**; adopted ones **Gary**, 7, and **Gariella**, 5, and a nephew whom he has taken in as his own, **Jason**, 6, and Garielle, 1.

"They all get along so well," their father said. "I love watching them play. I hope that they will remain close till they grow up. Cheska and I remain friends though we don't get to see each other that much. I'm at peace with Berna."

I teased the birthday boy, who is a nephew of former President **Joseph Estrada**. Does he have any plans of getting into politics, in keeping with the family tradition? "I can't say for sure although I really want to be of help to the people of Quezon," he said. "It's not the position that matters. It's the sincerity."

New gimmicks needed

IT'S no secret anymore that **Kris Aquino** and **Joey Marquez** are still together. As their friend (and *kumare*), I really hope they can make things official soon because both of them have had more than enough heartaches.

As I tell my friends, "I think I've exceeded the heartache quota allotted for one lifetime. Maybe I'll find Mr. Right in my next life." Hopefully that won't be the fate of Kris and Joey.

Since they are often seen together in public, it's funny that Joey sort of taunts the viewers of "S-Files" every time the show starts. He keeps cracking double entendres and promising the viewers that he'll finally reveal the real score before the show ends. But when the show ends, he leaves it all hanging again. His co-hosts **Richard Gomez**, **Paolo Bediones** and **Janice de Belen** play along, of course. They've got great rapport all right, but Joey must think of new gimmicks to sustain the viewers' interest. It's always been his nature as a comedian, and even in real life, to turn everything into one big joke, but punchlines repeated too often lose their punch.

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

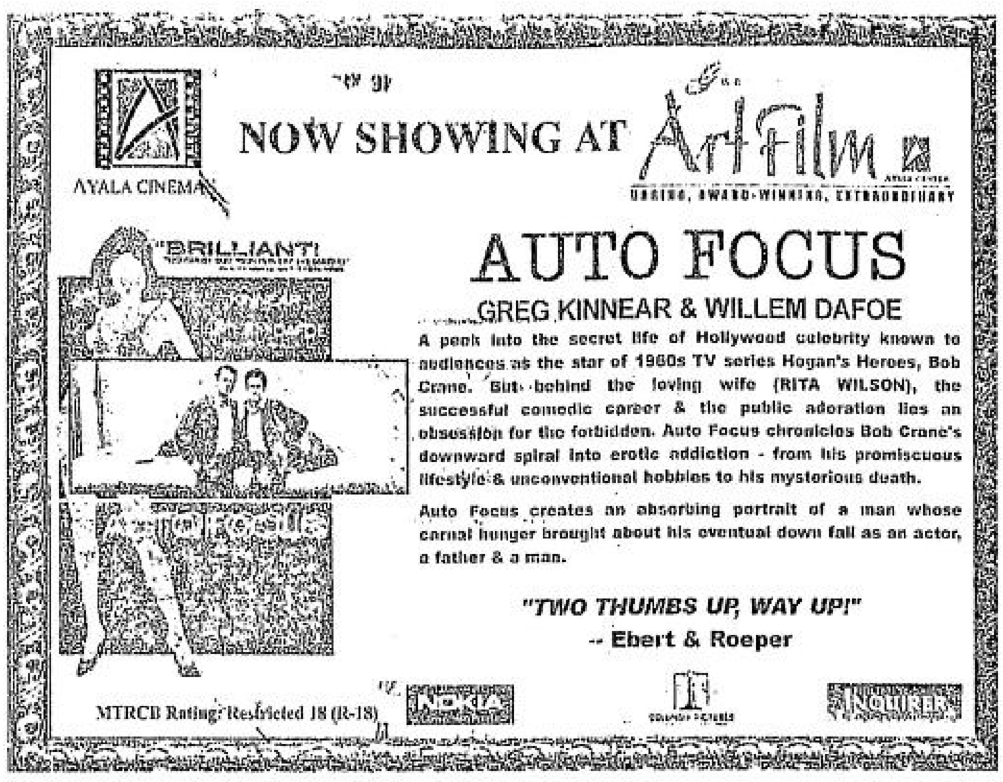
More ...

From page A32

Barris' program formats eventually overstay their welcome on the boob tube. Unable to change along with the times, he becomes an anachronism who lives only in the "glories" of his past.

Even here, however, reality obtrudes because those TV "glories" were really just tacky little shows that played to the least common denominator of viewers and ended up as mere footnotes to television "history."

Ironically, it was Barris' secret life as a CIA assassin that turned out to be more eventful—and cautionary. Events in this area of his life came to a head when he met a sultry female spy (**Julia Roberts**) who had designs not only on his heart but also on his life. In other words, she was tasked to kill him.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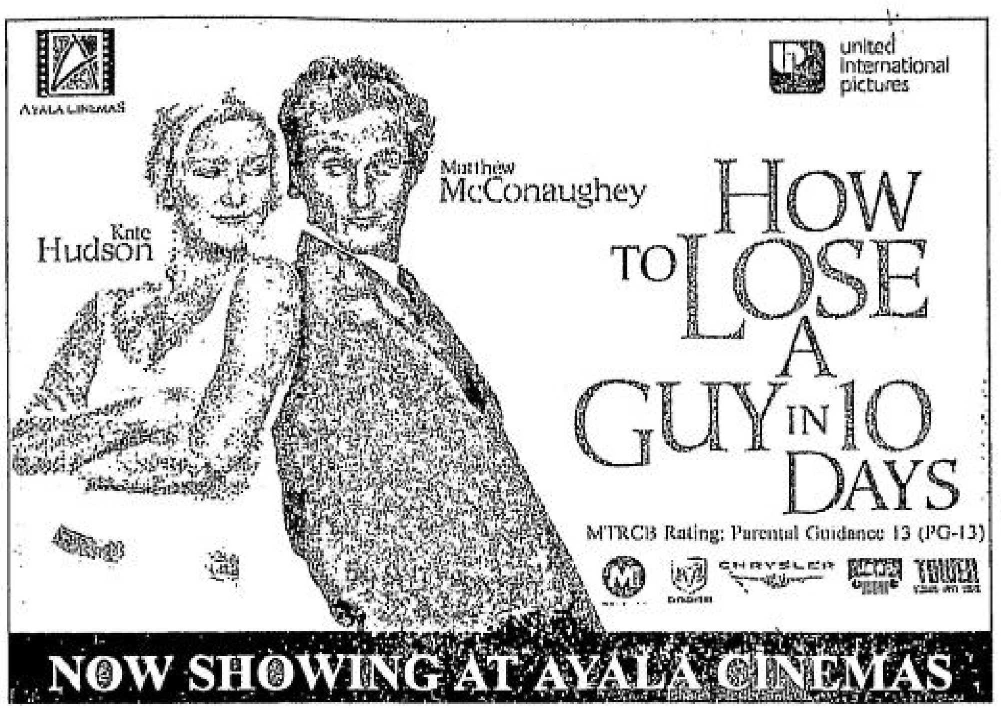
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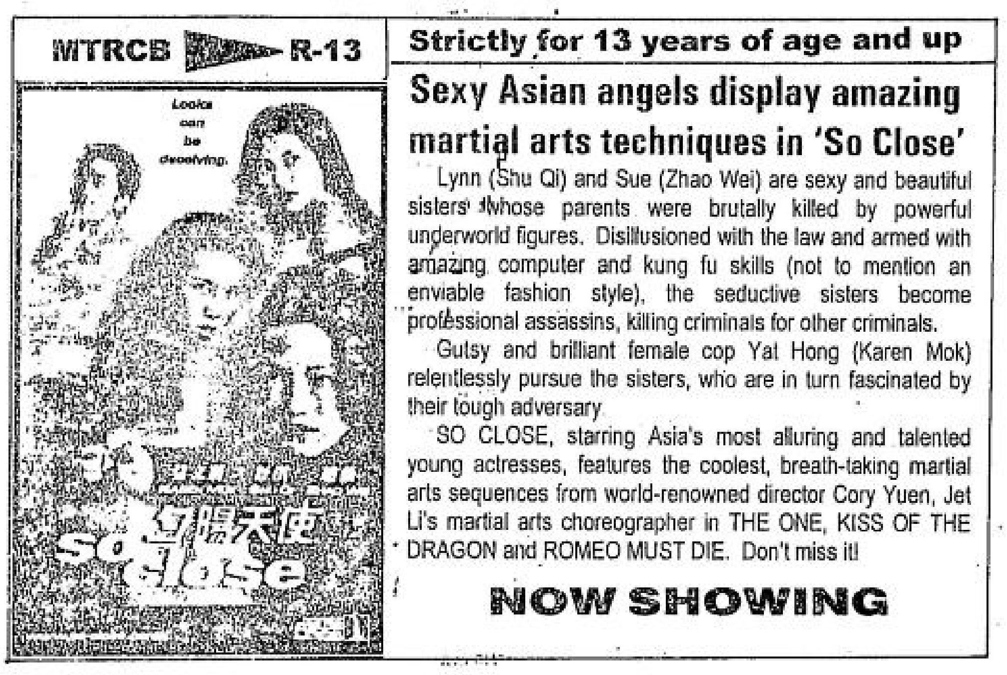
MTRCB R-13
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Gutsy and brilliant female cop Yat Hong (Karen Mok) relentlessly pursue the sisters, who are in turn fascinated by their tough adversary.
SO CLOSE, starring Asia's most alluring and talented young actresses, features the coolest, breath-taking martial arts sequences from world-renowned director Cory Yuen, Jet Li's martial arts choreographer in THE ONE, KISS OF THE DRAGON and ROMEO MUST DIE. Don't miss it!
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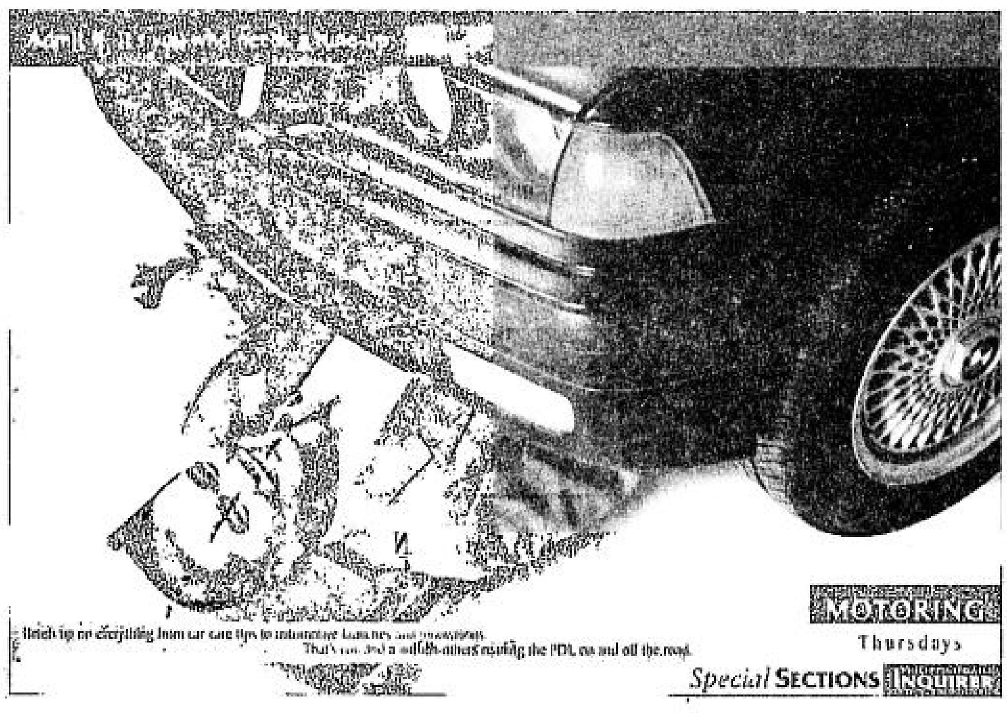
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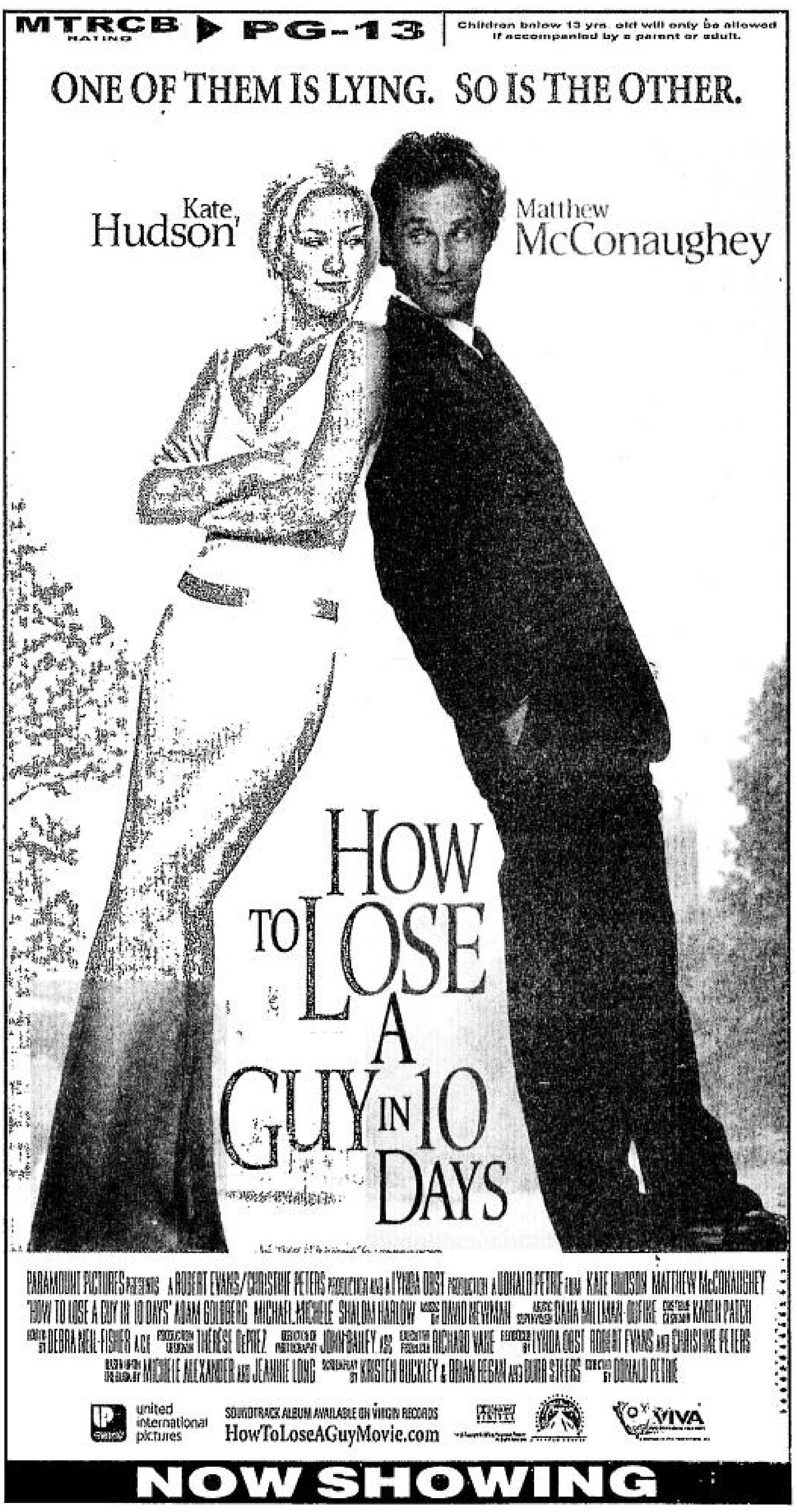
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ENTERTAINMENT
E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph
Editor
Louie C. Camino

Assunta, Jules clear Bong of 'rape'

By Leah Salterio

ACTRESS Assunta de Rossi and her husband, Negros Occidental Rep. Jules Ledesma, have cleared action star Bong Revilla Jr. following Assunta's claim on TV that she felt she was "raped" when she and Bong did the movie "Kilabot at Kembot" last year.

On the ABS-CBN talk show "Morning Girls" last Monday, host Kris Aquino had asked Assunta what her most traumatic experience in show biz was. Assunta said it was the love scene she had had to do with Bong in the 2002 movie, where "I felt I was raped."

She also claimed that her mom, Nenita Schiavone, and her former manager Manny Valera had forced her to reshoot a love scene with Bong in the movie.

On Tuesday, Bong told INQUIRER Entertainment he was surprised when his younger sister Andrea Bautista told him about Assunta's "rape" statement on TV. Bong's father, Sen. Ramon Revilla Sr., was also offended by Assunta's story, according to a source.

"Assunta and I are good friends," Bong said. "I have no problem with her nor with Jules, that's why I was wondering what prompted her to say that on TV. When we were re-shooting the scene, we were even laughing because it was the first time I showed my butt in a movie."

Also on Tuesday, Rep. Ledesma said in a text message to Andrea that what Assunta had said on TV was only an "allegorical" statement.

The congressman said his wife was not blaming Bong.

"For the record, *walang kasalanan si* Bong," Rep. Ledesma said in his text messages to Andrea. "*Mismong si* Assunta *ang nagbanggit niyan*. Ask Bong, I even thanked him that evening (of the reshoot) for being careful.

"Assunta lays, as do I, all the blame on the individuals who forced her to do the reshoot for whatever reason. *Sila ang may sala*. Please explain *na lang na 'yun ang tinukoy niya tungkol doon sa* rape. Allegorical *po*. Figure of speech, *'ika nga. Ibig sabihin, pilit, 'yun ang pakiramdam niya."*

SORRY. Assunta de Rossi and Bong Revilla in last year's "Kilabot at Kembot."

The lawmaker also sent text messages to Bong through the latter's sister.

The congressman sent this message for Bong: *"Kap, 'la 'yan. Kool lang 'pards—Jules and Sam."*

"Our family was hurt," Andrea said after learning of the TV interview with Assunta. "She (Assunta) made it appear that my brother was a rapist. If there's something wrong between her and her mom, I wish they wouldn't drag my brother into it."

Rep. Ledesma explained to Andrea that Assunta was referring to her personal situation and her problematic relationship with her mother at the time of the reshoot, and "most of all her despair and helplessness then."

"I repeat, Assunta was forced," he said in his text messages to Andrea. "As to who forced her, it's on public record at the Pasig-RTC."

He was apparently referring to the couple's petition for the annulment of Assunta's management contract with Valera. Among the grounds the couple cited was the incident involving the reshoot of the love scene with Bong.

The congressman also told Andrea she could pass on the text messages *"kahit sa barangay, para matapos na ito."*

More vital 'All About You'

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

LAST Sunday, **Dawn Zulueta** replaced Lucy Torres as host of the second season of the prenoontime magazine show, "All About You." With Dawn as its new host, the program has become more vital and thus more interesting.

On her maiden telecast, Dawn has for her *buena mano* guests **Cherie Gil**, who discussed living abroad and the beneficial effects of power yoga; **Jessica Soho** cooking *pinakbet*; and **Tessa Prieto-Valdes** dressing up **Karylle** and Dawn in her inimitable way.

That was an interesting mix of guests and features, but it was also *bitin*. Cherie didn't reveal the real score on why she was staying away so long from her husband and children in Italy. The power yoga demo didn't go into the spiritual aspects of yoga. And there weren't enough kooky looks in the "dressing up" segment.

Part of the problem is the show's 30-minute length. Since it has scored a coup by getting Dawn to host, the show's running time should be expanded to a full hour, the better to compete with **Charlene Gonzales**' "Feel at Home" on Channel 2.

In addition, the show's guest can also be more forthcoming and Dawn should know how to get real answers to the questions in viewers' minds. That's the secret of good TV hosting.

Finally, Dawn should be more fully involved in the show's features. That's an ace Charlene has on her program and its' appealing to viewers because it shows that the host is eager to work hard to entertain and inform her show's followers.

We know that, since she lives in Davao City, Dawn can fly to tape her show in Manila only twice a month. But her taping schedule should be maximized on those working visits so she can do more out-of-studio features, to add to her program's dynamic feel.

Intriguing protagonist

GEORGE Clooney has chosen an intriguing protagonist for his first directorial effort, "Confessions of a Dangerous Mind." The feature film tells the unique life story of TV game show producer **Chuck Barris** ("The Dating Game"), who turns out to also be living the secret life of a hired assassin for the CIA!

This startling fusion in one man of the intensely public world of television and the dark secretive and deadly underworld of espionage is wonderfully confounding to behold. Its very contradictions are its main reason for being filmed and viewed.

The contradictions are fascinating because they show that people are much more complex than we give them credit for.

And yet, Chuck Barris was able to fuse his two worlds into one reality that he could live without going to a mental institution: Whenever he had to "execute" somebody in an Eastern European country he arranged for the winners of his game shows to get their travel prizes to that godforsaken land!

Of course, the wry comedy of the scene is the fact that, while Barris, the top-secret assassin, is bumping off his latest victim, the game show "winners" are freezing their butts off in primitive hotel rooms with no central heating!

"Confessions" is loaded with such scenes of grim humor, as its protagonist tries to make his bizarre life seem ordinary and livable. Of course, it all unravels in the end, as his double lives both catch up with him, and peevishly bite him in the behind.

On the TV front, the wake-up call comes when

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Ali 5	MATRIX RELOADED
Ali 6	WALANG KAPALIT
Ali 7	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
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TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
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QUEZON CITY	
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ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
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CORONET B	A MAN APART
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CINEMA-7	TILL THERE WAS YOU
CINEMA-8	XEREX
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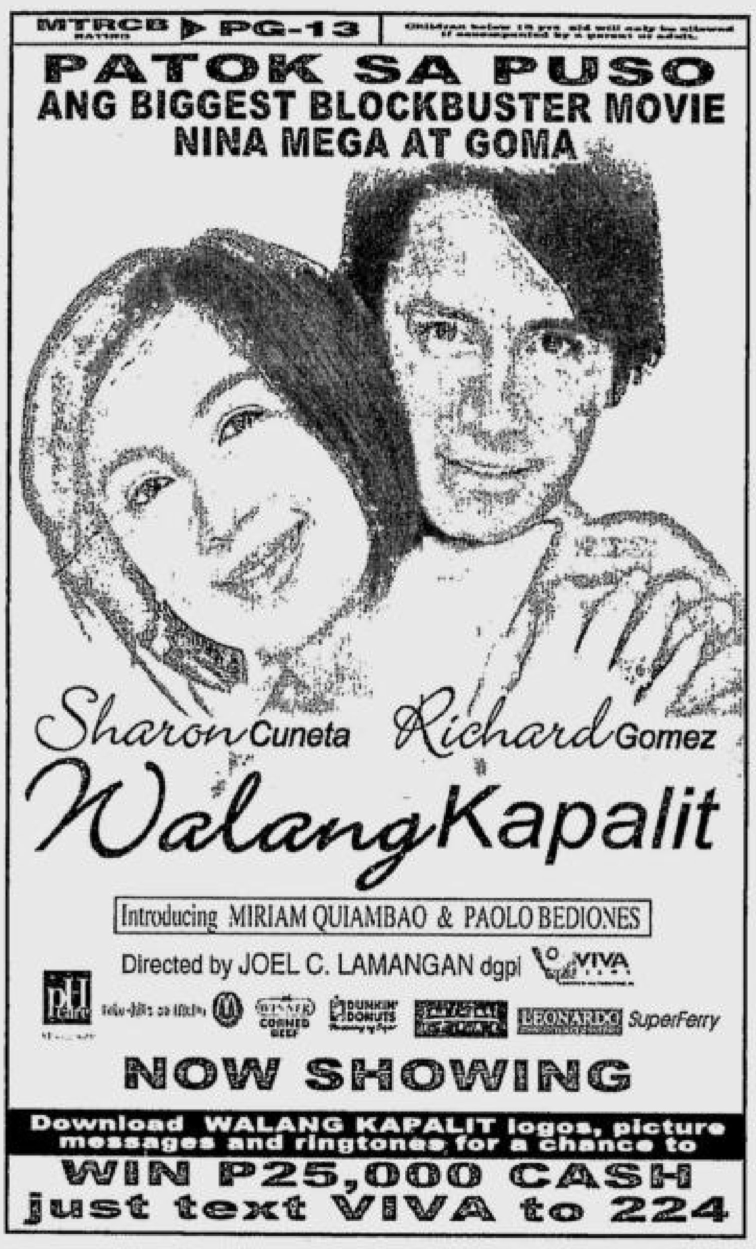
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	MATRIX RELOADED
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	SO CLOSE
CINEMA-12	HOW TO LOSE A GUY
CINEMA-14	RING 0
CINEMA-15	WALANG KAPALIT
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
CINEMA 1	WALANG KAPALIT
CINEMA 2	MATRIX RELOADED
CINEMA 3	FINAL DESTINATION 2
CINEMA 4	NATIONAL SECURITY
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA



MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13
PATOK SA PUSO
ANG BIGGEST BLOCKBUSTER MOVIE
NINA MEGA AT GOMA
Sharon Cuneta Richard Gomez
Walang Kapalit
Introducing MIRIAM QUIAMBAO & PAOLO BEDIONES
Directed by JOEL C. LAMANGAN dgpi
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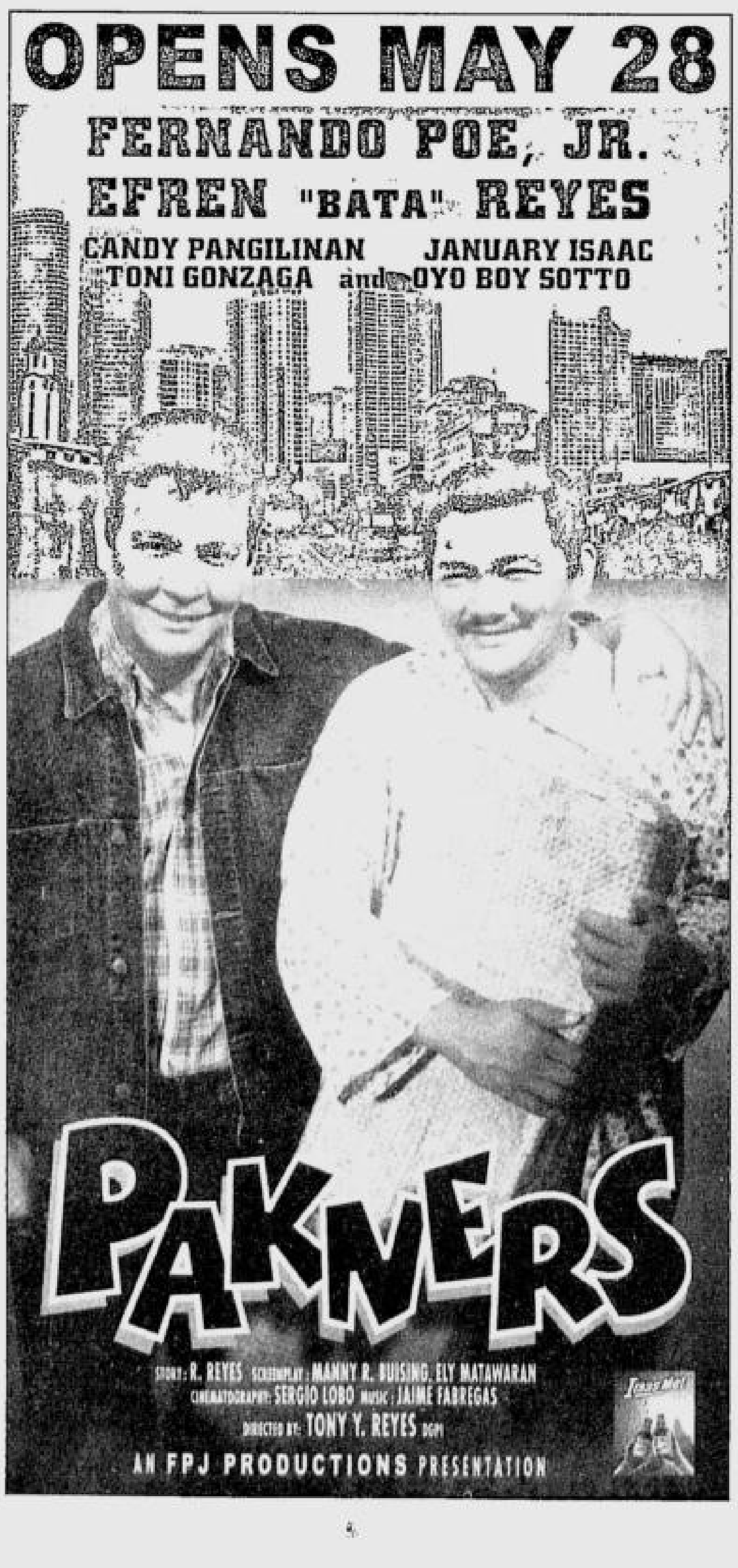

OPENS MAY 28
FERNANDO POE, JR.
EFREN "BATA" REYES
CANDY PANGILINAN JANUARY ISAAC
TONI GONZAGA and OYO BOY SOTTO
PAKNERS
STORY: R. REYES SCREENPLAY: MANNY R. BUISING, ELY MATAWARAN
CINEMATOGRAPHY: SERGIO LOBO MUSIC: JAIME FABREGAS
DIRECTED BY: TONY Y. REYES DGPI
AN FPJ PRODUCTIONS PRESENTATION

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND • EX

MATRIX: RELOADED R13 11:45, 2:40, 5:35, 8:30	MATRIX: RELOADED R13 12:40, 3:35, 6:30, 9:25	MATRIX: RELOADED R13 1:35, 4:30, 7:25, 10:20
SO CLOSE R13 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00	THE HOURS R13 12:00, 2:25, 4:50, 7:15, 9:40	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS P13 12:15, 2:45, 5:15, 7:45, 10:15

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MTRCB RATING ▶ G General Patronage ALL AGES ADMITTED
NOW SHOWING
Dina Bonnevie Ricky Davao
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Jiro Manio Paolo Ballesteros Alwyn Uytingco
Kung bawa't anak ay anghel sa lupa, bawa't ina ay langit.
Anghel Sa Lupa
A REGAL ENTERTAINMENT INC. PRESENTATION
Directed by Jose Javier Reyes, dgpi

THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2003

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BUSINESS

B1

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BIR files tax evasion cases vs 7 firms

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue yesterday filed tax evasion cases against five cell card distributors, a real estate developer and an aircon contractor, saying it had "very strong" pieces of evidence that can surely send the accused to jail.

The violations of the firms ranged from gross under-declaration and non-declaration of sales resulting in the non-payment of income tax or value-added tax, to the non-remittance of tax payments. The amounts of violations ranged from a low of P18 million to a high of P4.3 billion.

The seven firms charged by the BIR and their alleged violations were: Goldwell Construction Supply (cell card distributor), P378 million worth of under-declared sales; Cellpage International Corp. (cell card distributor), P4.3 billion worth of undeclared sales; Synergy Distribution Inc. (cell card distributor), P615 million worth of under-declared sales; TID International Inc. (cell card distributor), P410 million worth of under-declared sales; LM Camus Engineering Corp. (aircon contractor), P630 million worth of non-payment of tax; Eastpoint Marina Inc. (real estate developer), P18 million worth of non-payment of tax, and Ackers Philippines Inc. (cell card distributor), P3.28 billion worth of under-declared sales.

According to a source from the BIR prosecution group, the alleged tax violations were detected through the bureau's newly implemented auditing system called Relief (reconciliation of listings for enforcement). This computerized auditing system can detect tax leakage by matching tax declarations filed by taxpayers with third-party information, such as summary lists of sales of suppliers.

"They thought they could under-declare their income and sales as much as they wanted to. They did not realize the BIR could now detect tax violations through our computerized system," said another BIR official.

The Relief system was implemented this year and was the brainchild of BIR Deputy Commissioner Estelita Aguirre, who also heads the BIR's Large Taxpayers Division.

The BIR team said the cases filed against the seven firms were just the start of a campaign since the bureau would file more cases of tax evasion in the next few days.

The group also said the BIR was not bent on entertaining compromise settlements from the accused firms. The BIR officials said the bureau was not only after the collection of taxes but also wanted to send a strong message to other erring taxpayers to rectify their tax declarations before the BIR could detect them.

"Payment of taxes does not extinguish criminal liability," said the BIR official. "We really want to see some taxpayers sent to jail."

The BIR officials explained that the creation of the tax agen-

BIR/B2

3 BIR officials face criminal charges

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance has filed criminal charges against three officials of the Bureau of Internal Revenue in line with Malacañang's crackdown on corruption within the bureaucracy.

The DOF said it had filed charges before the Ombudsman against BIR assistant revenue director Aguinaldo Miravalles, assistant revenue district officer Kamil Bajunaid and former revenue district officer Godofredo San Jose Jr.

They were charged with offenses ranging from falsification of employment documents to false statements made under oath.

"Over the past few months, the DOF and the Office of the President's Transparency Group, with the Department of Justice, have been quietly conducting an investigation into irregularities committed by BIR officials," the DOF statement said.

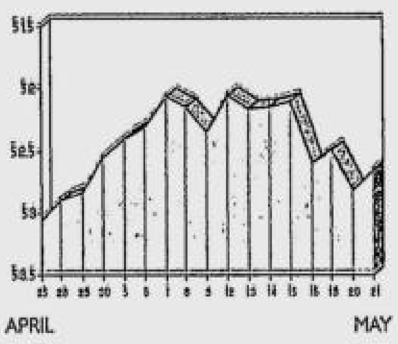
"Among the targets are BIR officials who falsify official records to allow them to stay in office beyond the age of retirement," it said.

"By making false statements and through false pretenses, these officials managed to convince judicial authorities or the Civil Service Commis-

3 BIR/B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 52.65 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., May 21, 2003

¥ 116.68 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., May 21, 2003

GOLD: $ 367.25-367.75

per ounce Hong Kong, May 21, 2003

STOCK MARKET

Stocks end down

SHARES closed lower for a second straight day yesterday as investors largely ignored a slew of good news such as higher April tax collections, traders said.

The market also shrugged off the World Health Organization's decision to remove the Philippines from its list of countries with local SARS transmission.

"Despite the flow of good news, it failed to prop up the market," said Astro del Castillo, analyst at A&A Securities Inc.

"We can only attribute this to further technical consolidation of the market. The market is just taking a breather."

The Philippine stock index lost 6.96 points or 0.66 percent to 1,046.16 points. The index has lost 8 percent from its peak this year in mid-April. It has also pared down its gains so far this year to 2.72 percent.

Turnover was mildly lower at P254.25 million from P257.25 million on Tuesday. Losers were in a two-to-one majority.

Reuters

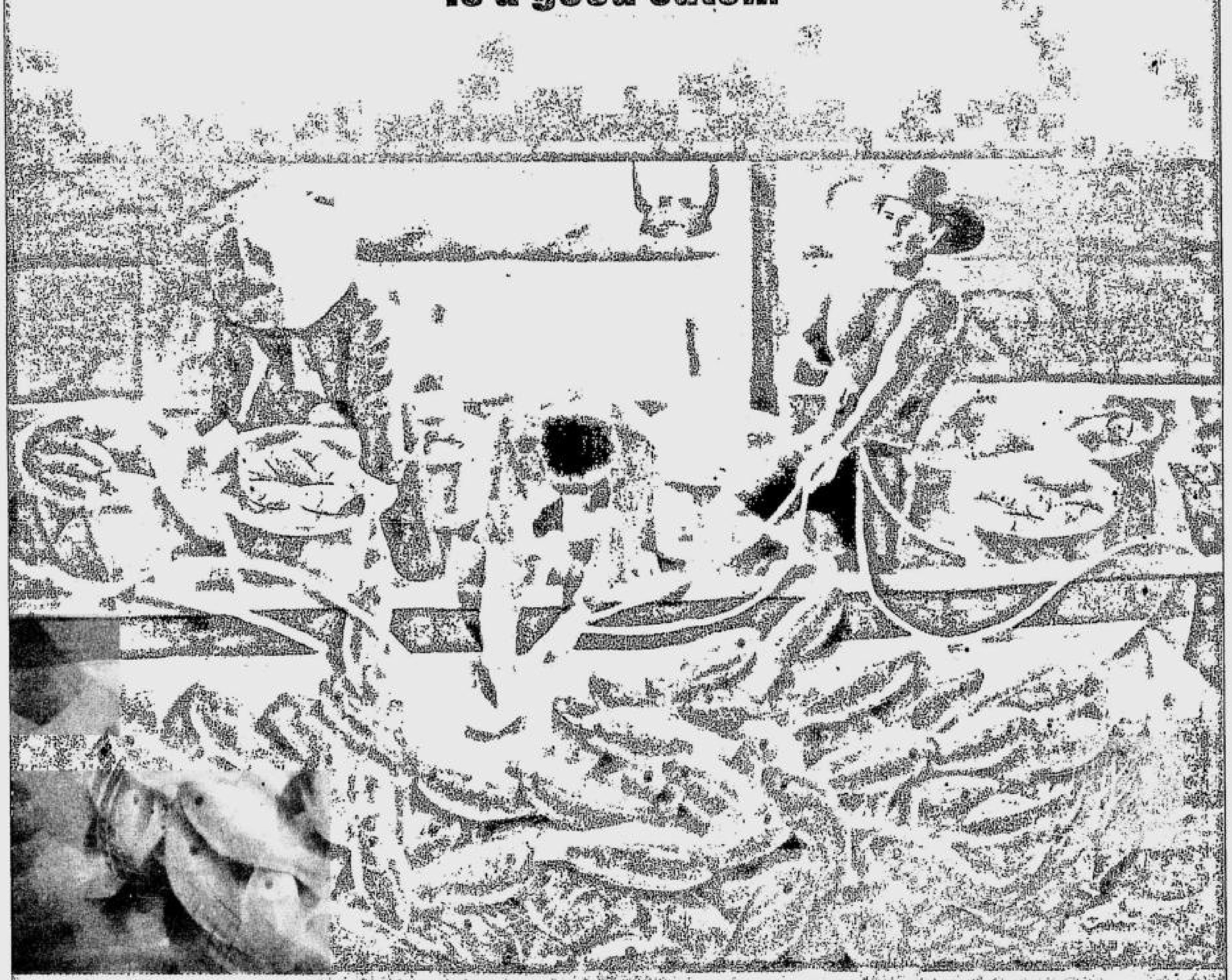
4-month BOP deficit at $519

THE PHILIPPINES posted a balance-of-payments (BOP) deficit of $519 million in the first four months of this year, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas announced yesterday.

For April alone, the BOP deficit was $17 million, the bank said.

Reuters

Somewhere in the sea
of investment opportunities
is a good catch.



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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Injury of peers

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

IF you are a stockholder of the publicly listed Cyberbay, you have the Supreme Court to thank for a minor injury. You are now the proud owner of worthless stocks.

But don't lose heart. Going around in business lately is a brilliant upbeat piece of advice. I hope you find it, and I am serious, as useful as Congress.

From the sound of it, anyway, the advice probably even comes from somebody who knows exactly what is going on behind the scene.

And the advice is, why don't you just sell your stocks, you foolish idiotic moronic nincompoop!

* * *

CYBERBAY is the former Amari, which in 1995 inked a contract with the government to reclaim land in Manila Bay for a fee, which was a share of the reclaimed land.

Instantaneously, after a brief period of only eight years, a new justice of the Supreme Court handed down a ruling—a landmark ruling!

Justice Antonio Carpio, appointed under this cute administration of Gloriaetta, ruled that reclaimed lands cannot be alienated in favor of private corporations.

Carpio is the same guy who started a law office which used to be called Carpio Villaraza Cruz law office but is now known in the business community as "THE firm."

* * *

THANKS to Carpio, and eight others of his peers, the injury to Cyberbay stockholders is done. Without the reclamation, they have nothing going for them anymore.

Unless of course they are willing to use their stocks for toilet paper. Or they can follow that in-the-know advice. Sell the stocks! Cut your loss!

And then what? Based on that worthy counsel, you can again try to recoup your losses by investing in the same reclamation project.

It seems, based on that sound piece of advice, "everything" has already been arranged, except of course my dinner date with Ara Mina. Just my luck!

* * *

AFTER all, even before the Supreme Court ruling came out, word already went around the stock market that some other group would, ahh, "inherit" the Cyberbay project.

There, it's such an easy solution to the tough problem of Cyberbay stockholders that nobody even saw its wisdom in this kind of a market.

Given up for dead, this stock market cannot absorb any unloading of any major holding, not even if what you want to unload is only phlegm.

Moreover, even in a good market, nobody would take those Cyberbay stocks, precisely because they were made worthless by the mint-condition Carpio doctrine.

* * *

BUT let's say that somebody is crazy enough to buy the Cyberbay stocks. Based on that guidance above, you then put your money in the same project.

The only problem is, at least to the Cyberbay stockholders, they have to gamble that the "heir" of the Cyberbay contract will escape the Carpio ruling.

Correct me if I'm always right, but that Carpio doctrine should apply to ALL of the reclamation projects this side of the SARS region.

Otherwise, the takeover group, whoever they are, or whoever are behind them, should only owe the Supreme Court one big huge favor. Nothing changes.

* * *

AND that, ladies and gentlemen of the injury, is actually the point of Cyberbay, when it went to the Supreme Court last week for a second appeal.

The publicly listed company is suggesting to the Supreme Court that the Carpio doctrine should be prospective.

Down here, "prospective" really just means "from now on." It is not exactly a "from now on" thing when the Carpio doctrine destroyed an eight-year-old contract.

Thus the Cyberbay stockholders can only look forward to more legal shuffles. These should only make them uneasy. How did they get duped in the first place?

* * *

RAISING money for this cute administration is not easy, even if you are the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

Under Commissioner Guillermo Parayno, the BIR got serious in its investigation of the so-called big taxpayers.

They are those big business—the corporations and the high networth individuals. A select group of BIR guys was doing a lot of digging.

All of a sudden, the investigation stopped. Well, the BIR came under attack from everywhere. Look, even the PCIJ came out with an exposé on top BIR officials.

* * *

TO solve the money problem of Gloriaetta and her boys, now the BIR wants to sell some properties of the Marcos family for their failure to pay taxes.

Sure, let's do it tomorrow. The property market is so buoyant nowadays, only two real estate companies are moving, namely, Ayala Land and Megaworld.

Somebody please tell me who in his right mind will buy those property from the BIR, even if they already have clean titles?

No, you cannot do any privatization unless the stock market comes alive. Property ventures are so risky, they need to share the risks with stock market investors.

Nobody is doing anything to revive the market. The SSS and the GSIS are still the only pension funds in the world that do not bother with the stock market.

* * *

LUCKILY, during the two-year stint of banker Carlos Arellano with the SSS, the pension fund made a lot of money in the stock market. Luckily.

At that time, in 1998, the SSS was already saddled with some of P30 billion of bad investments in real estate—housing and big-time property ventures.

By the way, Sen. Tessie Oreta is asking about those investments. She says, instead of raising the contribution rate, the SSS should collect on them.

The SSS went heavy on real estate, such as housing loans for members, under the administrations of Tita Cory and Kuya Eddie. Right, Joey?

* * *

YOU see, the SSS even bought several properties in the plush Urdaneta Village in the plush Ayala area of the plush Makati City.

At that time, word was going around that Urdaneta would become part of the Ayala commercial district, with all the high-rises and parking problems.

In other words, the SSS did some real estate speculation. It would realize a windfall. Unfortunately, the commercialization of Urdaneta did not happen.

Moreover, the SSS put a lot of money in the Smokey Mountain project of R-2 Builders of Reghis Romero, which turned into a disaster like the Centennial in Clark.

* * *

THIS is the sad experience of Rose Marie Liquete, a doctor, who is also the executive officer of the surgey department at the National Kidney & Transplant Institute.

Liquete recently came home from a 10-day trip to the United States. She attended her nephew's burial. Unfortunately, her US-based sister gifted her with a wireless telephone.

Asked by a customs officer at the Naia, a certain Al Fernandez, what she had in her luggage, she said a lot of books, journals, some candies, and a telephone. Wrong move!

The poor doctor got the lecturing of her life from the customs officer. She spent only 10 days in the US, and yet she was bringing in electronics, etc. Crucify her!

* * *

LIQUETE wrote to me: "Some passengers already have contacts, especially with the customs, to meet them at the airport for whatever reason."

No wonder, she saw a lot of what she called "ceremonial searches" at the customs lines upon her arrival. It was actually a long letter.

And why did she spend precious doctor's time to do it? "Maybe there is one good man in Customs who will look into the *custombres* in the Customs."

Read that as modus operandi. Right, Tony?

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Wednesday, May 21, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4	4	4	4	6,000
Banco De Oro Univ. Bank	15	15	15	15	66,000
Bank Of The Phil. Islands	34.5	35	34	34	862,400
China Banking Corp.	685	685	685	685	3,270
Citystate Savings Bank	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	2,000
Equitable Pci Bank Inc.	23.75	23.75	23.75	23.75	71,600
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	26	26.5	25	25	284,800
Philippine National Bank	23.25	23.25	22.75	22.75	112,000
Security Bank Corp.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	38,000
Union Bank Of The Phil.	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	16,100
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Manulife Financial Corp.	1450	1465	1450	1465	1,370
Pci Leasing & Fin. Inc.	0.89	0.89	0.89	.89	20,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1055	1065	1050	1065	3,370
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12	12	11.75	11.75	17,900
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.75	0.76	0.75	.75	400,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	530	545	530	540	15,330
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.038	0.042	0.038	.041	48,300,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	900,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	210,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co.	0.25	0.27	0.25	.27	290,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	420	425	415	417.5	167,160
Ivantage Corp.	0.37	0.37	0.37	.37	100,000
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.013	0.011	0.012	5,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	6.5	6.5	6.4	6.5	427,000
Manila Electric Co. B	9.8	9.8	9.7	9.7	151,000
Petron Corp.	2.08	2.1	2.08	2.08	3,563,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	30,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.48	2.48	2.48	2.48	57,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	2,340,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	4.7	5.7	4.7	5.7	65,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.46	2.46	2.46	2.46	20,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	15.5	15.75	15.5	15.75	50,000
RFM Corp.	0.67	0.7	0.67	.7	20,000
San Miguel Corp. A	54.5	0.5	5 54.	5 55	73,600
San Miguel Corp. B	65.5	65.5	65	66	225,200
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.33	0.33	0.33	.33	10,000
Ayala Corp.	4	5 4.	1 4.0	5 4.1	964,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.027	0 .02	7 .02	6 .026	1,500,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.62	0 .6	2 .6	2 .62	10,000
APC Group Inc.	0.105	0 .10	5 .	1 .1	190,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2	6 2.0	6 1.	8 1.86	795,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc	9	0 1	0	9 9	19,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.12	0 .1	2 .1	1 .11	300,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.28	0 .2	8 .2	6 .28	18,410,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.08	0 .0	8 .0	8 .08	300,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.2	0 .2	2 .1	9 .19	930,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.22	0 .2	2 .21	5 .215	1,300,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	7.9	0	8 7.	9 7.9	88,000
Ionics Inc.	0.75	0 .7	5 .	6 .6	140,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.4	2 1.4	2 1.4	2 1.42	105,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.01	0 .0	1 0	1 .01	2,000,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.009	0 .00	9 .00	9 .009	3,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.55	0 .5	5 .5	5 .55	210,000
Metro Pacific Corp	0.175	0 .17	5 .1	7 .17	1,060,000
Music Corp.	0.3	0 .	3 .2	9 .29	100,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.8	0 .	8 7	8 .78	120,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.8	0 1.	8 1.7	2 1.78	217,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	16.5	0 16.7	5 16	5 16.75	14,200
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.41	00 .	41	41 .4	1 7,350,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.38	0 .4	2 .3	8 .42	3,740,000
Philippine Racing Club	3	50 3	5 3	5 3.	5 5,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	11.7	5 11.7	5 11.2	5 11.5	655,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series K	10	0	10	10 1	0 1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10	0	10	10 1	0 1,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	5	0	5	5	5 322,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4	90 4.	95 4	.94.9	5 8,322,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.13	00 .	13 .	13 .1	3 370,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.16	00 .	16 .	16 .1	6 70,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.84	00 .	84 .	81 .8	2 15,910,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2	10 2	.1 2	.1 2.	1 1,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	4	85 4.	. 85 4	.8 4.	8 1,681,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.19	00 1	95	19 .19	5 990,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.2	50 .2	05 .2	05 .20	5 100,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0	034 .0	034 .0	034 .00	34 4,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.26	00 .	26 .	26 .2	6 400,000
OIL					
Interport Res.	0	20 .0	02 .0	02 .00	2 28,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0	026 .0	026 .0	026 .00	26 10,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.1	600	0.16	.16 .	16 100,000
Pacifica	0	085 0	085 .0	085 .00	85 1,000,000

DISCLOSURES

CORRO-Coat Inc. declared cash dividends of P0.025 per share in favor of stockholders of record as of June 16 and will be payable on June 30.

* *

FAR Eastern University designated Lydia Echauz as president effective June 1. Also, FEU bought East Asia Computer Center Inc.'s outstanding shares for P20 million.

* * *

IMPERIAL Resources Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on July 7, 10 a.m. at the 2/F West Room of Manila Golf and Country Club. Stockholders of record as of May 30 will be entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

SECURITY Bank Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 10, 9 a.m. at the Jonathan Dy Hall, 21/F of Security Bank Center, Makati City. The bank also declared a cash dividend of P0.15 per share.

* * *

ELECTED directors of Alaska Milk Corp. were Wilfred Uytengsu, Antonio Ozaeta, Wilfred Steven Uytengsu Jr., Michael Uytengsu, Grahame Tonkin, Jose Facundo, Roberto de Ocampo, Bernardo Villegas and Ramon Esguerra.

* * *

SOUTHEAST Asia Cement Holdings Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 25, 3 p.m. at the Mondragon House, 18/F of PBCom Tower, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of June 5 will be entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

May 21, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.854117	1.000000	52.668000
Japan	Yen	0.007317	0.008567	0.451200
United Kingdom	Pound	1.402374	1.641900	86.475600
Hongkong	Dollar	0.109519	0.128225	6.753400
Switzerland	Franc	0.661030	0.773934	40.761600
Canada	Dollar	0.632351	0.740357	38.993100
Singapore	Dollar	0.495859	0.580552	30.576500
Australia	Dollar	0.561144	0.656987	34.602200
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.265742	2.652731	139.714000
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.227759	0.266660	14.044400
Brunei	Dollar	0.494423	0.578871	30.488000
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000102	0.000119	0.006300
Thailand	Baht	0.020337	0.023810	1.254000
UAE	Dirham	0.232558	0.272279	14.340400
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.170800	61.663700
Argentina	Peso	0.296568	0.347222	18.287500
Brazil	Real	0.284800	0.333444	17.561800
Denmark	Kroner	0.134681	0.157684	8.304900
India	Rupee	0.018231	0.021345	1.124200
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.224798	0.263193	13.861800
Mexico	New Peso	0.083434	0.097685	5.144900
New Zealand	Dollar	0.500508	0.585995	30.863200
Norway	Kroner	0.126147	0.147693	7.778700
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014792	0.017319	0.912200
South Africa	Rand	0.110278	0.129114	6.800200
Korea	Won	0.000711	0.000833	0.043900
Sweden	Kroner	0.108867	0.127462	6.713200
Syria	Pound	0.020337	0.023810	1.254000
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024757	0.028986	1.526600
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000536	0.000627	0.033000

INTEREST RATES

May 21, 2003-MART1 Rates

SOURCE: MART/BLOOMBERG

Benchmark Interest Rates	MART1 21-May-03 (%)	MART1 20-May-03 (%)
1 Month	7.275	7.2208
3 Months	7.2438	7.2227
6 Months	8.2818	8.145
1 Year	8.6039	8.5885
2 Years	9.2769	9.25
3 Years	10.2654	10.2289
4 Years	10.9038	10.95
5 Years	11.3096	11.2885
7 Years	11.6885	11.6635
10 Years	11.8904	11.8788
20 Years	12.7596	12.8192
25 Years	13.2519	13.3308

BIR ...

From page B1

cy's prosecution group, which handles cases under the Large Taxpayers Division, early this year was part of Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr.'s overall strategy to improve the BIR's performance in terms of increased collection and going after tax evaders.

Should the courts find the accused guilty, company officers, certified public accountants and signatories to their tax declarations would shoulder the penalties, said the BIR official.

3 BIR

From page B1

sion to order a change of their birth dates on their official records," the DOF said.

"This allows them to stay in office for a longer time to reap the financial rewards of their illegal acts," it added.

The offenses are punishable with a maximum prison term of six years, permanent dismissal from service as well as cancellation of retirement benefits.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho earlier created an internal affairs unit witin the DOF known as the Central Management Information Office.

The department said it had set up hotlines (404-1774 to 76) which the public can call to report abuses and illegal acts of its personnel or those or the BIR and BOC.

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McCann-Erickson Philippines
Topic 2: **"Consumer Contact Points"**
Speaker: Ed Sunico, Country Comm. Channel Manager
Unilever Philippines (PRC) Inc.
Topic 3: **"The Changing TV Media Landscape"**
Speaker: Nic Gabunada, VP-Sales and Marketing
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.

Day 2-June 5

Topic 4: **"The Diminishing Line Between Above and Below the Line"**
Speaker: March Ventosa, Managing Director
Leo Burnett
Topic 5: **"Creative Media Given the Various Contact Points"**
Speaker: Angelica P. Suiza, Marketing Director
Adidas Philippines Inc.
Topic 6: **"The Changing Radio Landscape"**
Speaker: Mike Enriquez, SVP for Radio
GMA Network Inc.
Topic 7: **"The Changing Print Media Landscape"**
Speaker: Lisa Gokongwei, Publisher
Summit Publishing

Day 3-June 6

Topic 8: **"Media Management"**
Speaker: Venus Navalta, SVP/ Managing Director
Universal McCann
Topic 9: **"Creative Media"**
Speaker: August Benitez, President
Optimedia
Topic 10: **"Interactive Media"**
Speakers: Alfonso "Cholo" Tagaysay, Senior Marketing Manager, Value Added Services, Globe Telecom
Reginald Velasco, Communications Interactive Media Manager, Nestle Philippines Inc.

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Dumping of ceramic tiles persists despite duty

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE DUMPING of ceramic tiles from China and Indonesia has persisted despite the imposition of a safeguard duty on these floor and wall coverings last year.

Federation of Philippine Industries (FPI) president Jesus Arranza said yesterday that some traders have passed off their shipments of ceramic tiles from China and Indonesia as coming from Korea to evade the additional duty of P5.40 per kilogram imposed by the Department of Trade and Industry.

Arranza said that these traders have also resorted to under-declaring the volume of their goods by as much as 63 percent and undervaluing their ceramic tile shipments.

Based on a probe by the Bureau of Customs on two suspect ceramic tile shipments last month, Arranza said the findings showed prima facie evidence that traders of ceramic tiles from China and Indonesia have resorted to fraudulent tactics to evade payment of the safeguard duty.

The DTI imposed the safeguard duty—P5.40 kilogram for the first year, P4.30 per kilogram in the second year, and P3.50 per kilogram on the third year—in April last year.

The DTI imposed the duties after the Tariff Commission ruled that the import surge in ceramic tiles has caused local ceramic tile makers to incur massive losses.

The Tariff Commission noted that the increase in volume of tile imports starting in 2000 was "recent, sharp and significant" to cause serious injury such as loss of market share; inability to increase production and sales volume despite rising demand; decline in employment; under-utilization of capacity; and losses in operation.

Aside from China and Indonesia, ceramic tile shipments from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Malaysia are also covered by the safeguard duty.

Arranza commended Deputy Commissioner for Intelligence Rey Allas for stepping up the BOC's surveillance of ceramic tile shipments.

Arranza said the FPI's thrust was to eliminate smuggling that has crippled industries and deprived the government of taxes.

New rates to cut Napocor losses in 2003 by P20B

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE STATE-RUN National Power Corp. yesterday said its revised generation rates would shave off about P20 billion from its projected net loss this year of P113 billion.

The Energy Regulatory Commission approved the revised rates last May 15, which will bring down generation rates in Luzon by 7 centavos per kilowatt-hour.

Rates for Visayas, on the other hand, will go up by 16 centavos per kWh starting May. Mindanao rates are largely unchanged.

The revised rates mean that starting this month, Napocor would charge its customers in Luzon P2.12 per kWh from the previous P2.19; in the Visayas, P2.24 per kWh from P2.08. Mindanao rates are pegged at P1.02 per kWh.

The new rates will be reflected in the electric bills of consumers in two months.

Napocor vice president for sales Froilan Tampinco said in an interview the power firm had asked the quasi-judicial body to allow the following rates: P2.93 per kWh in Luzon, P2.92 in the Visayas and P1.42 in Mindanao.

"We asked for those rates only to recover the costs we incurred," Tampinco said. "They are break-even figures."

The official said the approved rates could reduce projected losses by only P20 billion. Tampinco added that Napocor had no choice but to ask the ERC again for higher rates.

Included in the new rates are P3.26 billion in under-recovered fuel purchase cost adjustment (FPCA) charges, which the ERC allowed in a separate order.

Distribution utilities that buy their supply from Napocor pass on the FPCA to end-consumers as the purchased power adjustment (PPA) charge.

In the order, the ERC said the P3.26 billion accounted for unrecovered costs of fuel and power bought from independent power producers, which were incurred between January 2001 and September 2002.

The quasi-judicial body said the recovery of the P3.26 billion would be broken down as follows: P2.04 billion would be recovered within three months in the Luzon power grid; P1.2 billion would be recovered in eight months in the Visayas grid and; P23.77 million would be recovered in four months in the Mindanao grid.

In costs per kilowatt-hour, this would translate to 39 centavos per kWh in Luzon, 47 centavos per kWh in the Visayas and a centavo per kWh in Mindanao.

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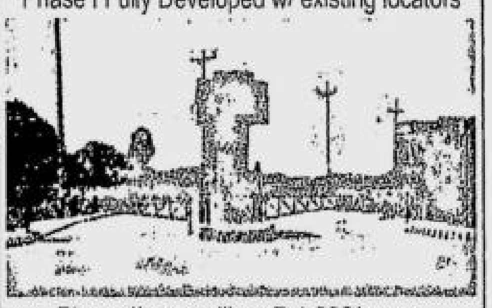

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NTC prepares rules to settle cable fights

By Abigail L. Ho

THE NATIONAL Telecommunications Commission has come up with proposed rules and regulations to prevent future squabbles between cable operators and program providers.

"The draft is already there but we still have to wait for the (Department of Transportation and Communications) to publish it. Then we'll have to conduct public hearings before the IRR can be implemented," Communications Undersecretary Virgilio Pena said in an interview.

The NTC drafted the IRR in response to a clamor from the local cable television industry for clear-cut rules on doing business with foreign program providers.

Under the draft IRR, foreign program providers would put themselves under the jurisdiction of local regulators so that they could neither commit irregularities in their dealings with local cable operators nor complain that local regulators did not give them enough protection.

NTC chief Armi Jane Borje said in an earlier interview that under the new rules, foreign program providers would have to be accredited by NTC before they can do business in the Philippines.

They should also have in-country agents that could answer any questions that the regulatory body might ask regarding their businesses here.

They should likewise refrain from engaging in any monopolistic or unfair work practices, including choosing which cable operators they would give their programs to for carriage.

The DOTC order and the cable television IRR were created mainly in response to complaints that some foreign program providers, especially those with top-rating cable channels, were being choosy when it came to cable operators that would carry their programs.

'Tiangge' organizers appeal BIR ruling

By Michelle V. Remo

"TIANGGE" organizers have questioned the move by the Bureau of Internal Revenue to impose taxes on the small retailers, saying that the BIR should go after big businesses instead.

Emmanuel Rapadas, chief finance officer of Ortigas & Co. Ltd. Partnership, which leases tiangge space at the Greenhills Shopping Center, said the BIR should spare tiangge operators from additional taxes because they only earn "meager" income.

"We lament the fact that these operators whom they want to tax are really the small ones. Some of them even came from Mindanao and went here with limited capital just so they could get rid of the chaos there," Rapadas said in an interview.

The BIR recently issued RR 16-2003, which requires tiangge stall owners to pay business and income taxes.

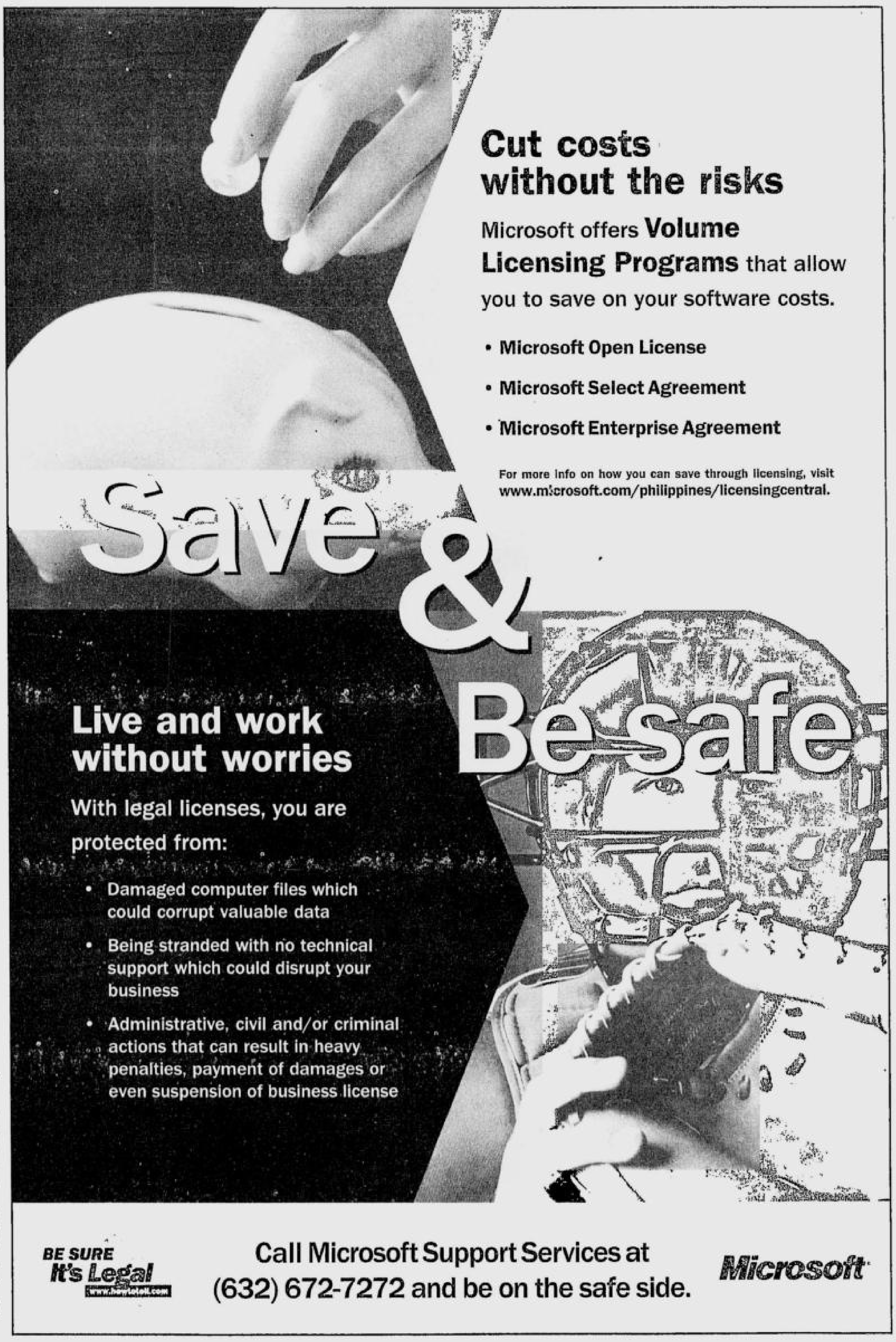
The regulation mandates that the taxes be paid in advance and would be deducted from the store owners' actual income tax payments.

The business tax (value added tax or percentage tax) is P150 per day or P4,500 per month, while the income tax is P50 per day or P1,500 per month.

The BIR, for its part, said imposing taxes on the flea market operators is a way of leveling the playing field since the established tax-paying retailers have seen their sales fall because of the proliferation of flea markets.

BIR Manila Regional Director Ruperto Somera, who is also the author of the regulation, also said that the BIR does not believe that the store owners are not earning enough.

"The average rent in Greenhills, for a period of 24 days, is P35,000. If they are willing to pay that amount, which even excludes overhead expenses, it means they are earning. We presume that it is really a lucrative business," said Somera.



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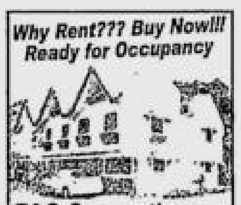

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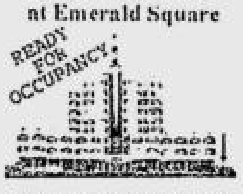

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late ARMANDO BALUYOT has been extrajudicially settled among his heirs on May 13, 2003 and absolutely sold to ABRAHAM, MOISES and RUTH all surnamed DE CASTRO as per Doc. No. 186; Page No. 39, Book 1; Series of 2003, before Notary Public Marianito R. Atienza of Bacoor Cavite
PDI-May 15, 22 & 29, 2003

The public is notified that the Intestate Estate of Deceased Publio M. Hernandez has been extra-judicially settled by the heirs under Deed of Extra-Judicial Settlement dated May 2, 20003 identified in the Notarial Register of Atty. Roel Costuna as Doc. No. 265; Page No. 53; Book No. I; Series of 2003 (PDI-May 8, 15 & 22,2003)

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Immaculata Academy of Malolos '55 reunion

ON MAY 24, Class 1955 of the Immaculata Academy of Malolos (now Holy Spirit Academy) will hold its reunion at the Montessori Integrated School of Antipolo.

The celebration starts at 11 a.m. For particulars, call Mila Villena-Tan at 374-2954, Magdalena Cruz-Divino at 426-0531,426-6266, or 0917-5335635, Purificacion Ramos-Cruz at 252-7638, Zorayda Dimaguiba-Manaligod at 373-5968, 0919-6990473, Teresita Tanloco-Zafra at 044-7911512, or Rizalina Santiago-Yuyongco at 044-7912319.

For details on the venue, call Sylvia Garcia Lazo at 372-4413, 697-5761

RP asked to step up efforts to boost finances

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE VISITING International Monetary Fund mission has urged the Philippines to step up efforts to boost public finances, citing the dwindling government revenue and the deteriorating fiscal position of the state-owned National Power Corp. as major concerns.

In a press briefing Tuesday night, the IMF mission said improving public fiscal position continued to be the country's key policy challenge as it aired concern over the 5.5 percentage point drop in the government's revenue as a ratio of gross domestic product (GDP) from the 1997 level.

"The sustained decline in government revenue relative to the GDP needs to be reversed to allow a reduction in debt levels over the medium term and to create room for needed development expenditures," the mission said.

"The losses and the financing needs of Napocor also require attention," it added.

The mission conducted policy discussions with Philippine officials from May 7 to 20 as part of the IMF's post-program monitoring.

It said that adhering to the target deficit for 2003 would be an important first step for the country and that this would require actions on tax administration, tax policy and expenditure management.

The government aims to limit its budget deficit this year to P202 billion versus the P212.7 billion shortfall incurred in 2002 (when the original celing was set at P130 billion).

On tax administration, the IMF said it was supportive of the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR)'s recent efforts to strengthen tax administration, including the introduction of tax benchmarking and the tax-mapping exercises.

The mission said there was an urgent need to address the disruptions on VAT (value added tax) collections as well as to conduct effective internal audits, strengthen collection of tax arrears and prosecute large tax evaders.

"Initial measures could include restoring the real level of excise taxes to 1997 levels and indexing tax levels to inflation," the IMF mission said.

The mission likewise cited the need to maintain tight control of expenditures in order to meet the 2003 target deficit.

It noted that the sizeable reduction in maintenance and capital expenditure budgeted for this year would be difficult to sustain in the medium-term, underscoring the need to rebuild the revenue base.

"Looking beyond 2003, the government needs to flesh out a credible program to balance the budget by 2009, relying primarily on measures to boost revenues," it said.

Civil service reform was cited as another important measure that could free up budgetary resources over the medium term.

The IMF also emphasized the need to prioritize reforms in the energy sector.

Restoring confidence in the audit system

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

(Conclusion)

SPECIAL REPORT

NEVER before in the history of corporate America has investor confidence gone so low. The rash of company shortcomings—submission of bogus financial statements and executives giving themselves big bonuses and salary increases while their companies were suffering losses—angered investors prompting them to shy away from the market.

The US government responded to the urgent call to restore investor confidence by passing the Sarbanes-Oxley (Sarbox) Act on July 30 last year.

The Sarbox Act seeks to restore confidence in public financial reporting; promote a higher level of responsibility, accountability and financial reporting transparency, and to satisfy the investors' need for integrity of information.

The provisions were largely built around the principles of independence, integrity, proper oversight, deterrence, accountability and certification, transparency and disclosure and strong internal controls.

Legislative measure

Tarlac Representative Jesli A. Lapus adopted the provisions of the Sarbox Act and filed House Bill No. 5260 in September of last year.

Lapus said the bill seeks to regulate corporate abuses in the Philippines through the following provisions:

- Banning accounting firms from providing most of the consulting services to companies they audit;
- Rotating the accounting partner overseeing the audit of a specific company every five years to ensure auditor independence;
- Requiring chief executive officers to certify to the accuracy of their financial reports to promote corporate responsibility;
- Prohibiting executives of publicly-listed companies or companies imbued with public interest such as pension and educational pre-need firms from taking out loans from the company;
- Imposing a 20-year jail sentence to those found to have defrauded investors;
- Imposing a 20-year jail sentence to those found to have shredded or altered records of companies while under investigation.

"Again, transparency and accountability should reign if capitalism is to succeed. Nothing more, nothing less," Lapus said.

The bill also seeks to enhance financial reporting by requiring companies to disclose off-balance sheet transactions and those involving their management and principal stockholders. It also intends to improve the regulatory framework governing the audit firms by establishing an oversight board. The Lapus bill provides that the oversight board should be composed of non-CPAs, which is hoped to result in a more objective review of public accounting firms as well as more reliable accounting and auditing standards.

The Lapus bill was presented for its first hearing last March and a technical working group was formed to fine-tune its provisions. The group includes representatives from the SEC, Board of Accountancy and Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

SEC Chair Lilia R. Bautista, however, said the commission had already started strengthening existing rules under the Securities Regulation Code to answer the call for increased investor protection.

Bautista cited Rule 68.1, the special accounting rules of the SRC on listed and public companies.

"We now impose appropriate sanctions on any officer or director of a company covered by SRC Rule 68.1 who causes untrue or misleading information in the financial statements or materially incomplete financial reports," Bautista said.

Penalties

An erring officer or director faces a basic penalty of P100,000 plus a daily fine of P500 until the information is corrected or completed.

Bautista said the same penalty would be imposed on any officer or director of a company or any other person found to have influenced, coerced, manipulated or misled the external auditor, thus, resulting in misleading financial statements.

Company management was likewise mandated to disclose to the company's audit committee and to its external auditor the following: all significant deficiencies in the design or operation of internal controls that could adversely affect the reporting of financial data; weaknesses in internal controls, and fraud involving management or employees who exercise significant roles in internal controls.

"With the independent oversight board envisioned by the Lapus bill and the new rules we have promulgated, we hope that investor confidence in our capital market will be raised as a result of more reliable financial and accounting information," Bautista said.

Both the Sarbox Act and the Lapus bill emphasized on increased management responsibility over the financial statements and internal financial and audit controls because it was management that would ultimately determine if the financial statements depicted accurately a company's financial condition.

It is for this reason that the SEC had released the Code of Corporate Governance, which requires public companies to submit a Manual on Corporate Governance by September last year for implementation in January this year.

The manual on corporate governance is supposed to embody the commitment of the company's management and board of directors to preserve, protect and enhance the value of the corporation.

Bautista said earlier that "the Code of Corporate Governance institutes several reforms which are intended to strengthen board oversight, improve management accountability and safeguard the rights of minority shareholders."

Audit committee

One of the items highlighted by the SEC Code was the need to strengthen the role of the audit committee.

According to a publication of SGV & CO., entitled, "Audit Committee, Playing a Key Role in Corporate Governance," the audit committee is the working committee of the board, which oversees both internal and external audits.

The audit committee must understand a company's internal control system; risks of fraudulent financial reporting; the status of any legal, regulatory or ethical matters that affect financial reporting, and the potential effects of emerging business risks.

"Overseeing the financial reporting process is one of the most important and most difficult responsibilities of the audit committee. The audit committee must ensure that the company has a high quality financial reporting process," the report said.

"To fulfill their expected role, members of the audit committee must have an understanding of the company's business," the report added.

The SEC Code provides that the committee must have at least one independent director and that its chair should be an independent director.

"It is believed that an audit committee with no financial or other material personal ties to management is more likely to be able to objectively evaluate the propriety of the management's accounting, internal control and reporting practices," the SGV report said.

Monitoring compliance

Not too many companies, however, have such audit committees in place.

SGV had conducted a survey among participants of its forum on corporate governance held in August last year, and the results showed that out of 75 companies that participated, only 40 percent had audit committees in place.

Only 60 percent of the companies have structured processes to ensure and monitor compliance with laws and regulations. The majority of the respondents believe that there is still room for improvement in their internal audit control mechanisms.

These results show that the Philippines still has a long way to go before the well-meaning reforms are implemented.

The SEC, the legislature and the various professional organizations can indeed push as many new rules and regulations as they want to restore investor confidence and ensure that financial statements follow international standards to the letter. But they can only go so far.

In the end, the success of these reforms rests squarely on the shoulders of these public corporations, their board of directors, their management and the external auditors.

These institutions must be able to work together for a higher purpose of serving not just themselves, but also the interests of their shareholders and the investing public .

Primetown settling debts, starting new projects

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE PRIMETOWN Property Group Inc., controlled by the Yap family, said it would focus this year on its recapitalization program to settle the company's debts and enable it to start new projects and businesses on a clean slate.

Primetown said the program involved the participation of its principal shareholders and prospective strategic investors in the settlement of the real estate developer's obligations to banks and buyers of uncompleted projects.

In line with this, the publicly listed property firm said it had entered into a memorandum of agreement with a third-party developer last year for the development of a condominium project using the existing structures of Primetown's Meditel project in Mandaluyong City. The project will be undertaken through a joint venture with the landowner and the Meditel buyers.

The MOA took effect in the first quarter of this year after the necessary counterpart agreement with the landowner was signed.

Primetown said that a similar program was being planned for its Goldcoast project in Mactan, Cebu. This, it said, would take care of up to P300 million owed to buyers.

Primetown, however, warned that if the Philippine economy would continue to weaken, the Goldcoast plan might be stalled further or might not come to fruition as prospective investors might lose confidence in the market.

"The continued uncertainty in this regard, may affect the company's future liquidity position and future operations," Primetown said.

In the meantime, the property firm said it would also spin off its hotel business and turn over the management of its rental pool units to the association of unit owners.

Primetown noted that the spin-off would stop further capital loss as the hotel operation had been incurring deficits in the last three years.

AN OPEN LETTER

A long-drawn, agonizing indictment vs dedicated public servants at the BIR

Life, it is said, is never without its storms and trials.

Over the past months the Bureau of Internal Revenue has been in the midst of a truly historic tempest, arguably the single greatest trial it has had to endure in its almost 99 years of existence. For reasons that we have yet to fully fathom, the Bureau has been the hapless target of concerted and relentless attempts to abolish this institution, eradicate its long history of service to the nation, and effectively deprive thousands of hard-working revenue personnel of their jobs.

The latest in this series of "attacks" against the Bureau and its workforce is a three-part report published by the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism in at least two broadsheets. This report seeks to paint a picture of the Bureau as an agency that is hopelessly riddled by corruption, and is beyond salvation.

We in the Bureau have always understood that ours is a difficult mandate, and that by the nature of our work, we will be subject to periodic – and often undeserved – denunciations. Nonetheless, we lament this latest condemnation leveled at us by the PCIJ, moreover in light of the manner in which the PCIJ obtained information from certain Bureau officials and employees.

The PCIJ did indeed send letters to a number of Bureau officials and employees. These letters, signed by PCIJ reporter Tess Bacalla, declared that the PCIJ was "currently doing research on the BIR", and that "to ensure fairness and accuracy, we would like to get your side" on certain information the PCIJ had obtained on the Bureau official to whom a letter was addressed. The information being requested, incidentally, concerned the assets and property of the official concerned.

In light of the ideals of journalism, we understand the desire of any journalist to obtain all facts relevant to the issues he or she is writing about, hence we appreciate the PCIJ's declaration that it is "doing research on the BIR". Be that as it may, the PCIJ, however, did NOT request information from ALL Bureau officials and employees on their assets and property. Thus, the PCIJ did not obtain a truly complete picture of the Bureau and its personnel, and as such, its report cannot be said to be truly representative of the profile of a revenuer, be it as a private citizen or as a public servant.

In order to qualify as a "research" and to "ensure fairness and accuracy", the "life-style check" that the PCIJ is apparently conducting should have involved all fourteen (14) Assistant Commissioners instead of only two (2); all nineteen (19) Regional Directors, instead of only two (2); all nineteen (19) Assistant Regional Directors, instead of only one (1); all one hundred fifteen (115) Revenue District Officers instead of merely one (1) who was singled out.

Moreover, there were a number of Bureau officials to whom letters were also sent by the PCIJ whose names did not appear in the three-part report. If the PCIJ seeks fairness and accuracy in its report, why did it not make mention of ALL Bureau officials to whom letters were sent? It is in this regard that the PCIJ report may be said to fall short of a true "research" undertaking, much less can it be described as truly "fair and accurate".

The PCIJ report merely adduced the basic salary of the concerned Bureau officials and their Net Worth based on their Statements of Assets and Liabilities, as of December 31, 2000. A non-accountant, however, would not be able to tell that this is NOT an accurate way to assess a person's net worth, considering that this approach does not consider other sources of income of the officials, their spouses and children, nor the very real possibility that a revenuer may have inherited, or was a donee, who received certain properties in his or her name. The PCIJ report, therefore, is highly misleading, to say the least.

In this regard, any aspersions cast on a revenuer are, in effect, aspersions cast also on his loved ones, and indeed, there are no words to describe the distress and anguish caused to every revenuer's family by the wholesale vilification of the Bureau that is the PCIJ report. In one fell swoop, every revenuer has been cast as the villain in this long-drawn-out and now increasingly agonizing campaign to effect the wholesale indictment and removal from office of every revenuer in a "trial-by-publicity".

It is double heartbreaking that the PCIJ report came out exactly one (1) week after the House Committee on Appropriations had declared that House Bill Nos. 5054 and 5465, which seek to abolish the BIR and establish the National Revenue Authority – a corporatized revenue collecting agency – would be set aside and deferred, pending the conduct of a Joint Congressional Hearing between the Committees on Ways and Means, Appropriations and Government Reorganization. It would seem as if there are forces at work who intend to see to it that the Bill will be passed not on the basis of its merits, but on the basis of a misguided image unjustly inflicted upon the Bureau.

Be that as it may, we in the Bureau continue to hope that the basic decency that is at the heart of every human soul will serve to remind the public that despite anything that may be said about the Bureau, there is – and always will be – in this agency men and women who serve with dedication and integrity. It is for them that we shall continue to fight for the right of the Bureau to exist as a competent agency of the Government, and as a faithful servant of the people.

We appeal to every revenuer to heed the message of Commissioner Guillermo L. Parayno, Jr. to *"remain steadfast and focused in our mission. We can prove our critics wrong by our solid accomplishments. We shall come out of this a stronger and better Bureau. Let not our spirits and discipline be shattered."*

In the end, the truth will come to light. And in the end, justice will prevail.

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President

ANTONIO F. MONTEMAYOR
Exec. Vice-President

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ENGR. JOSE M. LAKI

of GUAGUA, PAMPANGA

Died in the Grace of our Lord
on May 18, 2003 at the age of 76.

His bereaved family, wife **FANNY BARIN**;

children
LENI & JOSEF HOLZNER
BUBUT & MANNY MENESES
TITA & JIMMY ONG
EULA & MARK WARREN
AUXI & DARIO GUIAO
BOGI & MAR AND GRANDCHILDREN

Brothers, Sisters and Sisters-in-law
FRIDO & VITA RODRIGUEZ
ROMY & ANGIE
MASANG L. RAZON
MELY L. LANTIN
NIDA L. VERA
ROSIE N. LAKI
BABY H. LAKI

AUNTS, NEPHEWS & NIECES AND OTHER RELATIVES request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Baguio Memorial Chapel, Naguilian Road, Baguio City.

Interment will be on Saturday, May 24, 2003 at Baguio Memorial Park Cemetery, Naguilian Road, Baguio City after the 8:00 a.m. funeral mass at St. Vincent Church, Naguilian Road.

Our Dearly Beloved

VIRGINIA KAMANTIGUE SUAREZ

Peacefully joined her Creator on May 19, 2003 at the age of 82.

Her loving husband **Jesus**; children **Raul** and **Pining**, **Mario** and **Amy**, **Bim** and **Philipp Mendoza**, and **Ramon**; grandchildren **David** and **Daniel**, **Mikko** and **Nikki**, **Trisha** and **Nico**, **Sabrina**, **RJ** and **Sandra**; brothers and sister-in-law **Napoleon** (†), **Cesar** (†) and **Lucia** and **Jaime** (†); relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

She was cremated on May 20, 2003 at the Loyola Memorial Park Crematorium in Marikina City. Her remains lie in state at the Sanctuario de San Jose.

Interment details to be announced later.

"You will be forever in our hearts, Papa"

CHUA TIAN HAN

Now peacefully rests in the infinite Grace and Goodness
of the Lord on the 21st day of May, 2003
at the age of 87.

His loving wife **ALICE (TSU TSAI)**; children **MAUREEN, THOMAS, JEAN & CAROLYN**; sons-in-law **JOHN ALSTON** and **JOHN CHANG**; grandchildren **ANDREA, MICHAEL, SABRINA, STEPHANIE, KIMBERLY & SAMANTHA** and other relatives and friends request you to join us in celebrating his coming home to the Lord.

His remains lie in state at Chapel B-6 (South Wing), G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City from the 22nd to 26th of May, 2003.

Interment will take place in Washington D.C., U.S.A.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of

Marcelino V. Reyes

who passed away on May 16, 2003
wish to express our deepest gratitude to all of you who offered prayers, sent flowers and spiritual offerings, kept vigil with us and in immeasurable ways were just there when we needed it most.

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Name	Date of Interment	Time	Place of Interment	Place of Wake
ALBERTO C. ZORILLA	May 23	8:00 A.M.	Holy Gardens Memorial Park Taytay, Rizal	Arlington East Capilla D
JUANITO V. RAYMUNDO	May 24	9:00 A.M.	Holy Gardens Memorial Park Angono, Rizal	#744 Mercury St., Constellation Homes, Angono, Rizal
LEONARDO A. MORAL	May 22	3:00 P.M.	Holy Gardens Valley Mem. Park, Antipolo City	#39 Lazaro St., Sto. Niño, Marikina City
FABIAN B. CAMPOS SR.	May 24	9:00 A.M.	Holy Gardens La Union Memorial Park, San Fernando City	Jucutan Rd., Madayegdog San Fernando City
LEONCIA MUNAR	May 22	10:00 A.M.	Holy Gardens Greenhills Memorial Park Calamba City	#218 Ilang-Ilang St. Christopher 2 Subd., Mayapa, Calamba City

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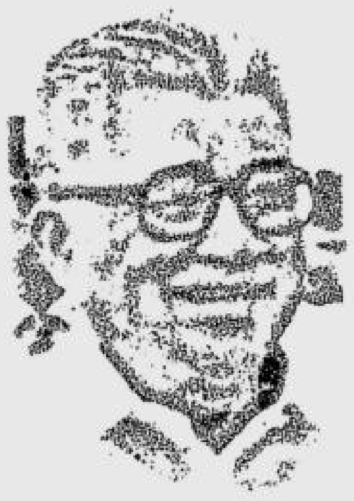
Thank You

To our friends & relatives and the former associates of our late mother, our sincerest thanks for your expression of sympathy during our time of sorrow.
May God always be with you.

From the family of
Remedios Maglaque Cayari
May 22, 1919 - May 7, 2003

"I will bless you and make your name great, and you shall be a blessing."
Genesis 12:2



TELESFORO "POY" A. UNAS

Vice-Mayor, Maragondon, Cavite, 1953-1955
Mayor, Maragondon, Cavite, 1955-1986
Vice-Governor, Cavite, 1987-1992
Congressman, 3rd District of Cavite, 1992-1998

In Peace and Grace joined our Lord Father
on May 20, 2003 at the age of 76.

His children and their spouses: **Eric**, **Rolly** & **Mabee**, **Nona** & **Dimi**, **Gina** & **Caloy**, **Reddy** & **Oyette**, **Vic** & **Lily**; stepchildren **Emma** & **Alex**, **Romy**; grandchildren **Suzy**, **Toby**, **Kristine**, **Cathy**, **Michelle**, **Jod**, **James**, **Joshua**; brothers and sisters and their spouses **Enard** & **Lulu**, **Rani** & **Puring**, **Mory** & **Nita**, **Zeny**, **Edith** & **Lino**, **Neilo**; relatives and friends join in prayer for his eternal repose in heaven.

His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels in Araneta Avenue, Quezon City until 7:00 a.m., Friday, May 23, 2003.

His remains will be brought to the Provincial Capital, Trece Martirez, Cavite for a short necrological service, then transferred to Maragondon, Cavite and will lie in state at the Municipal Hall.

Interment will be on Sunday, May 25, 2003 at the Maragondon Catholic Cemetery after the 2:30 p.m. requiem Mass.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.
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OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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Theme: 'Overseas Filipinos Worldwide: The New Economic and Political Force'
May 23-25, 2003
Hall 3, SM Megatrade, Mandaluyong City, Philippines

HIGHLIGHT OF ACTIVITIES

- ○ 3-day conference for Overseas Filipinos Worldwide
- ○ 3-day trade exhibit showcasing business opportunities and investments for overseas Filipinos and their families
- ○ Business matching and presentations of exhibiting companies
- ○ Socials and fellowship night of overseas Filipinos
- ○ City tours for overseas Filipinos

Reserve your exhibit booth spaces and register NOW!

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

DAY 1, May 23, 2003 — Focused on OFW Contribution to Philippine Society
10:00am - 5:00pm

- ○ Registration
- ○ Welcome Remarks
- ○ Keynote Address
- ○ **Topic 1:** The Overseas Filipinos in Nation Building --- Impact on Philippine Economy
- ○ **Topic 2:** The Overseas Filipinos in Nation Building --- Impact on Society, Culture, Politics and Family
- ○ **Topic 3:** What the Overseas Filipinos and the Government should and can do to enhance the former's contribution to the Philippine economy
- ○ Position Paper Presentations of Conference Delegates (1 for each country represented)
- ○ Conference Resolutions
- ○ Cocktails/Socials for Overseas Filipinos

DAY 2, May 24, 2003 — Focused on Business & Economics
10:00am- 5:00pm

- ○ Registration
- ○ Program for Overseas Filipinos by DOLE
- ○ Business Opportunities for Overseas Filipinos/ SMEs by DTI
- ○ Technology Assistance to Overseas Filipinos/ SMEs by TLRC
- ○ Sources of Funds for Overseas/ SMEs by Landbank of the Philippines, Development Bank of the Philippines, Small Business Guarantee Fund Corp., OWWA
- ○ Entrepreneurship Seminar for Overseas Filipinos
- ○ Business Presentations of Trade Exhibitors (Franchising, Retail Trade, Service Industries, Insurance/Pre-need Plan, Real Estate, Food Processing, Handicrafts, IT Education & Training, Agro-industrial)
- ○ Cocktails/Socials for Overseas Filipinos

DAY 3, May 25, 2003 — Focused on Government Programs for Overseas Filipinos
10:00am- 5:00pm

- ○ Registration
- ○ OFW Reintegration Program by DOLE
- ○ The Role of OWWA in the Economic Development of OFWs
- ○ The Role of POEA in the Economic Development of OFWs
- ○ The Role of DFA in the Economic Development of OFs
- ○ Parallel Sessions
  - How to Start a Business
  - Marketing Your Business / Product
  - Project / Business Financing
  - Do's and Dont's of Investments
  - Crisis Management for SMEs
  - Simple Budgeting & Accounting
- ○ Special Presentation of the 2004 Presidentiables (Topic/ Question: If you are to become the President, what will be your program for overseas Filipinos?)
- ○ Cocktails/ Socials for Overseas Filipinos

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- ○ Banks / Credit Cards
- ○ Health / Medical / Dental Services
- ○ Franchising Companies
- ○ Computer Hardware / Software

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Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT of AGRARIAN REFORM
REGIONAL OFFICE NO. XI
Quimpo Avenue, Ecoland, Davao City
Fax No. 226-2150 • Tel. Nos. 296-2038 to 39

CARP FORM NO. 5(A)
Revised 2003

NOTICE OF COVERAGE

Pursuant to Section 7 of Republic Act (RA) No. 6657, otherwise known as the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1988, the Republic of the Philippines, thru the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), hereby subjects under the coverage of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) the hereunder described landholdings:

Name of Landowner	Title No.	Area Covered	Location of Property
1. Herminigildo Malcampo Antonio Benaning	T-59826	20.4543	Osmeña, Compostela Valley
2. Armenio Lorenzo	T-54323	23.1800	-do-
3. Felix Santos	T-72398	6.0033	-do-
4. Joveno Ancheta/ Sergio Mahinay	T-62963	3.4132	-do-
5. Rodante Marukot	T-54998	6.9411	-do-
6. Wivina Cuyno	T-63614	2.1543	-do-
7. Jose Sadora	T-54490	11.4536	Magsaysay, New Bataan, Compostela Valley
8. Osias de Leon	T-62179	6.7997	-do-
9. Alberto Gura	T-51737	6.7483	-do-
10. Katz Tierra	T-10594	10.7076	Bantacan, New Bataan, Compostela Valley

Whenever applicable, the above-named landowners have the right or privilege to:

1. Apply for an exemption clearance or for exclusion from CARP coverage;
2. Retain an area not exceeding five (5) hectares pursuant to Section 6 of RA 6657;
3. Nominate your children who may qualify as beneficiary/ies to the subject landholdings; and/or
4. Submit evidence for determining just compensation of the subject landholding

To exercise any of the above landowner's rights/privileges, the necessary application or petition should be filed within sixty (60) days from the date of this publication otherwise same shall be waived and shall constitute an authorization for the DAR to pursue the CARP coverage of the subject lands pursuant to RA 6657 and existing rules and guidelines.

Necessary application/petition shall be filed with the DAR Municipal Office of Compostela, Compostela Valley, DAR Provincial Office of Tagum, Davao del Norte or DAR Regional Office XI, Davao City.

Documents relative to the CARP coverage of the subject lands are available for reproduction at the above stated DAR offices subject however upon payment of reasonable reproduction costs and certification fees.

(Sgd.) **HOMER P. TOBIAS, CESO IV**
Regional Director

(PDI--May 22, 2003)

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TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Date: April 8, 2003
LOAN NO.: MIYAZAWA
Contract No.: Sp01.SPTL.Mm-0338

1. The ***National Power Corporation (NPC)*** has received a loan from the ***Miyazawa Funds*** for ***Zamboanga City Area 138 kV Transmission Line Project*** and it is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract ***Supply and Delivery of Transmission Line Materials for the Sangali - Pitogo 138 kV Transmission Line Project.***
2. The ***National Transmission Corporation (TRANSCO)*** administering the bidding of the said project, now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the supply and delivery of:

   Schedule I - Steel Towers, Leg/Body Extensions, Templates and Accessories

   Schedule II - Power Conductors, Aluminum-Clad Overhead Groundwire, Tower Footing Ground Wire and Accessories

   Schedule III - Insulator Assemblies, Line Materials and Hardwares

   Schedule IV - Optical Fiber Groundwire (OPGW), Tower Attachment Assemblies and Accessories.
3. Bidders may obtain further information from and inspect and acquire the bidding documents at the ***Office of the Manager, Bids and Contracts Management Department, 2nd Floor, Building 2, Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City (Zip Code 1104), Philippines, Tel./Fax Number: 921-2308.***
4. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested eligible bidders starting **April 15, 2003** upon submission of a written application to the above office, and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of ***ten thousand pesos (Php 10,000.00).***
5. A two-envelope bidding procedure will be adopted. Bidders are to submit simultaneously two (2)-sealed envelopes, one (1) containing the technical proposal and one (1) containing the price proposal. Initially only the technical proposals are opened. Technical proposals which are submitted by non-qualified bidders or which are not substantially responsive are rejected. The substantially responsive technical proposals that have been submitted by qualified bidders are discussed with the bidders and the bidders are requested for full compliance. The bidders may or may not submit a supplementary price proposal, which contain the changes in price resulting from the discussed changes in the technical proposals. The original price proposal and the supplementary price proposal are opened simultaneously in public.
6. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of:

   Schedule I - Forty Thousand Three Hundred US dollars (US$40,300)

   Schedule II - Seventeen Thousand Seven Hundred Twenty US dollars (US$17,720)

   Schedule III - Thirty Three Thousand Four Hundred Eighty US dollars (US$33,480)

   Schedule IV - Eleven Thousand Nine Hundred Ninety US dollars (US$11,990)

   The bid security must be included with the technical proposal.

   The deadline for the submission of bids will be on **June 17, 2003** at 1:30 p.m. at the aforementioned address. Late submissions will be rejected.
7. The technical proposals together with the bid security will be opened immediately thereafter in the presence of bidder's representatives who choose to attend.
8. The price proposals will be opened in the presence of the bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the time and date and at the address to be advised by the Employer after approval of the evaluation of the technical proposals.
9. TRANSCO reserves the right to reject any or all Bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.
10. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) **WINIFREDO SM. PANGILINAN**
Chairman
Bids Award Committee

(PDI - May 3, 6, 14 & 22, 2003)

OBITUARIES

RAMON Y. MANAWIS

Peacefully joined the Lord on May 20, 2003
at the age of 46.

His bereaved wife **FE**; children **ISAH, PAOLA** and **RAYMUND**; mother **JOSEFINA**; father **MANUEL** (†); brother **HECTOR & GINA**; sisters **MALU & TONY**, and **JINGLE**; in-laws **LITA** (†), **TIM, DODONG, JUN** and **ROMY**, and other relatives request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the Presidential Suite, Loyola Memorial Chapels, Inc., Guadalupe, Viejo, Makati City.

Interment will be on Sunday, May 25, 2003 at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at Loyola Memorial Chapels, Inc.

> "Let the words of my mouth meet your Favor, keep the thoughts of my heart before you, Lord, my rock, my redeemer..."
>
> **Psalm 21:15**

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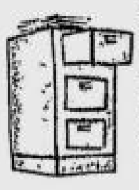

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Nokia 6610 (w/ camera & headset)	-	-	-	8,000	3,000	FREE	FREE
Nokia 7210	-	-	-	8,500	3,000	FREE	FREE
Nokia 7210 (w/ camera & headset)	-	-	-	11,800	6,000	FREE	FREE
Nokia 6100	-	-	-	9,000	4,000	FREE	FREE
Nokia 6100 (w/ camera & headset)	-	-	-	13,800	8,800	FREE	FREE
Ericsson T310	-	-	-	2,500	FREE	FREE	FREE
Ericsson T310 (w/ camera)	-	-	-	3,500	FREE	FREE	FREE
Sony Ericsson P800	-	-	-	23,200	17,500	10,000	3,500

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Xcite	May 23- 24, 30-31, June 6-7
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DAVAO:	
Gaisano Mall	May 22- 31
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Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**

Fernando setting order to Metro road networks

By Charles E. Buban

YOU either love him or hate him. One only has to watch Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando on his day-to-day dealings to understand why he is adored by some and loathed by others, and why there is no in-between.

Barely a year from assuming office he earned many supporters—and enemies—on his on-going campaign to rid Metro Manila's streets of vendors and other forms of obstructions to ease traffic.

He was called "fascistic" by urban poor groups while most Metro Manila mayors plus a number of surveys threw their support behind the 55-year-old engineer and former mayor of Marikina City.

Indeed, Fernando needs all the support he could muster for carrying out the gargantuan task of unclogging Metro Manila's arteries, making its air much breathable, and make the country's most populous area livable again.

This reporter dropped by Fernando's home in Marikina City one Sunday morning to be updated on his plans to finally clear Metro Manila's congested environment. Here's an excerpt of our conversation:

INQUIRER: **Apart from clearing sidewalks of vendors, structures and other obstructions, what other projects do you have at the moment?**

BF: Right now, we are also doing what we call geometric improvements of our road ways. We are trying to establish clear ways that are conflict-free, meaning no crossings (left or right turns), while some wider and applicable roads follow a rotunda-like traffic flow.

INQUIRER: **That scheme is for the road networks, what about the vehicles using them. Is the unified vehicular volume reduction program (otherwise known as "color coding") enough to limit vehicles plying Metro Manila's streets?**

BF: We are trying to ask the owners of the public utility vehicles to rationalize the dispatch of their units so that there won't be too much of their vehicles plying the road at certain time of the day. When demand is less, there should also be less of them.

FERNANDO PHOTO: ERNIE SARMIENTO

The cooperation of the PUV companies is crucial.

INQUIRER: **What about vehicles that are no longer road-worthy, are they next on your list?**

BF: Vehicles that did not pass the smoke emissions tests (as a requirement for registration as mandated under the Clean Air Act) should not be running in Metro Manila streets and those that get stalled in highways will be towed by our people.

In this regard, owners themselves will be forced to remove their dilapidated vehicles from our streets for economic reason. With the Act being enforced, owners have no choice but to do something with their vehicles—fix or add necessary improvements on their engines or buy a new one, which ever is cost efficient for them.

Inquirer: Does this mean even the two-stroke engine motorcycles can still ply Metro Manila's streets provided they comply with the emissions test?

BF: Two-stroke engines would continue plying Metro Manila's streets until the MMDA and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources agree on possible amendments to the Act that requires their phaseout so right now, as long as a two-stroke motorcycle can pass the emissions test, they will be allowed to run.

Also, we will not object on how owners of two-strokes will accomplish this—either by using additives or installing something to clean the emissions coming from the engine.

INQUIRER: **I understand the MMDA is looking for terminals for public utility vehicles? Tell us more about this.**

BF: In our effort to rationalize the loading and unloading of passengers, the MMDA, through its "terminals and stands" team, is now actively roving Metro Manila to look for more strategically located terminals for PUVs.

There are only a number of PUV stands and terminals in Metro Manila that the PUVs could use and adding PUV terminals that have strategic locations will give PUVs their due share of the road.

This will also give them a chance to prove themselves, as the motorists are always blaming the PUVs whenever there is heavy traffic on the road.

We want to eliminate that stigma toward the PUVs that they have secondary rights and that private vehicles have more rights over them in using some of these roads. This is a wrong concept that creates friction.

INQUIRER: **Is this why you are also opening more subdivision and village roads for public's access despite their homeowners' opposition citing security risks?**

BF: Subdivision and village plans and its roads were approved on the premise that they are to interconnect with existing roads. You see if one subdivision or village close its roads, it alters the road networks around it, which is one reason we have traffic congestion.

INQUIRER: **How are the local officials taking your various projects and campaigns in their area?**

BF: I believe most of them understand that what we are doing here is for the good of everybody. In fact, we are filling in some aspects where they need some assistance. We're to support one another.

BMW'S ultimate sports activity vehicle

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

BAYERISHCHE Motoren Werke was running true to form when the BMW X5 was launched in 2000. Instead of calling the X5 a sport utility vehicle (SUV), BMW chose to call it a sports activity vehicle (SAV). As with all other BMW vehicles, there is nothing utilitarian about the X5, you see—even if it was ostensibly created to tackle off-road terrain as well as smooth highways and city streets.

You'll forget about off-roading, though, once you get your hands on the latest and now the top-spec X5 model, the 2003 X5 4.6is. Powered by a 4.6-liter, 32-valve, V-8 engine capable of 347 bhp at 5,700 rpm and 350 lb-ft of torque, the X5 4.6is sprints from 0 to 100 km/h in a sizzling 6.5 seconds and can proceed to a top speed of 240 km/h, leaving arch rival Mercedes-Benz ML55 AMG eating its dust. In fact, the X5 4.6is was the world's fastest SUV until the even pricier (US$ 88,900) Porsche Cayenne Turbo came along. But even then, Porsche had to resort to integrated twin turbochargers to beat the BMW X5 4.6is in the acceleration game.

BMW lineage

True to its BMW lineage, the X5 4.6is never loses its poise as it whips around corners with minimum body lean. Automatic transmission with Steptronic allows you to switch to the manual-shift mode for more enthusiastic, sportier driving. The 20-inch tires (275/40WR20 up front and huge 315/35WR20 at the rear) stick to dry roads like glue and Dynamic Stability Control optimizes stability and boosts traction when the need arises. The X5 4.6's startling velocity is checked when necessary by upgraded, enormous 4-wheel disc brakes. Hill Descent Control reduces the X5's speed when driving down steep inclines, thereby keeping the vehicle under control.

Despite its monster tires and 4,806-lb curb weight, the X5 4.6 is light and easy to maneuver, thanks to steering assist. The inside and door mirrors automatically dip when you select the R (reverse) position. Park Distance Control (PDC) aids the driver further when parking by emitting audible warning signals if the car is approaching an obstacle. At times, however, the eight ultrasonic sensors of the PDC seem to be overreacting and can unnerve the driver.

The driving position is excellent, with the high-rise, electronically adjustable driver's seat giving a commanding view of the road and the multi-information display (MID) centrally located and handy. Pressing the button sequentially in the turn indicator lever, you can call up computer information in the MID, such as ambient temperature, average fuel consumption, range before refueling and average road speed. The function keys and display of other on-board systems such as the clock, audio systems and telephone are also found in the MID.

High-tech practicality

When you press the corresponding buttons on the seat, the car's computer system will memorize and call up any of three different driver's seat, door mirror and steering wheel positions. Multi-function buttons on the steering wheel operate the audio system, cruise control, certain telephone functions and the voice input system while rain-sensing wipers add to the X5's high-tech practicality.

Head, leg and shoulder room is generous up front, only adequate

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QRV AT CORDILLERA'S BOSOM

Family hauler cushions bumpy trip to Ifugao

Text and photos
by Tessa R. Salazar

PUSHED to the wall, the mini family hauler QRV-R Serena proves that it can evolve into a tough transport to cushion a bumpy trip. It recently displayed this ability when our team went to far-flung Ifugao province, at the bosom of the cloud-capped Cordillera mountain ranges.

Our mission was to deliver five Pentium 2 computers (Windows 98) donated by Netopia for the use of 400 students in Mayoyao, Ifugao. The town school's 10 units of black and white PCs were on the brink of extinction.

Devoid of any viable stopovers, restaurants and even gas stations, the roller coaster ride from Ramon in Isabela (the last stop for a decent washroom or even a cellphone signal) to Mayoyao consisted of five hours of bone-jarring bumps and edge-of-the-cliff curves. The scenery, though, was magnificent.

The trip, in all, took 14 hours for all of 300 kilometers, one way from Manila.

Cozily snuggled in the mountains, Mayoyao is said to own some of the more majestic rice terraces. It has a land area of 33,556 hectares, a population of about 16,000, and is one of the 11 towns in Ifugao province in Northern Philippines.

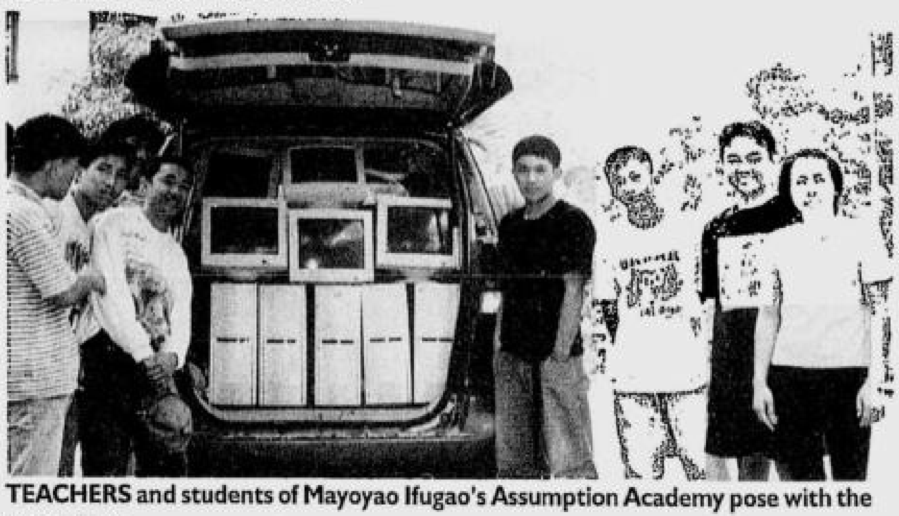
OUR "RIDE in shining armor" in the Cordilleras is a black QRV-R.

Our QRV-R Serena endured the ride and all five of us. It cradled our five sensitive PCs (screens, CPUs and all), with a little help from a lot of pillows, jackets, styrofoam, and any other cushioning we could find.

Highlighting our drive were sights of lush greenery, rice terraces, mountain passes, and seemingly endless blue sky. Sparsely furnished but unique Ifugao shelters and smiling people with red-stained teeth (the result of chewing betel nut) greeted these five road trippers.

Perhaps it was just dumb luck that this trip went without a hitch. With the kind of roads we went over, we couldn't help wondering how on earth the Serena could have managed without getting a flat tire (the vehicle was fitted with city-driving tires). Best of all, the computers arrived at the destination safe and sound, and all five units were tested and found to be in perfect working condition.

NATURE and machine commune.



TEACHERS and students of Mayoyao Ifugao's Assumption Academy pose with the computers.

Aside from that small miracle, everything about the Serena performed as expected. Its suspension and shocks did the job. Not one of us was tired after 14 hours. In fact, the passengers were asleep for well over half of the trip. The sporty response of the engine worked well in the steep uphill climbs.

The wide-angled driver's view was also suitable for blind mountain curves, and the wide windows for passengers accorded the group perfect views of the scenery (and even unnerving views of the edges of the road where deep cliffs began and never seemed to end).

During the entire 23-hour run from Manila to Mayoyao and back, the Serena seemed to burn gas more efficiently than in stop-and-go city traffic. For the total 700 km, we spent P2,300 on unleaded gas.

Our thanks to the people of Mayoyao, who welcomed us wholeheartedly.

Verdict: You don't need a 4x4 to take you to Ifugao anymore. The P1.19-million AT QRV-R was the quiet hero. But with a view as magnificent as the Cordilleras, who needs the in-line VCD player?

THE VIOS, the new premium compact sedan

Toyota unleashes the new Vios

TOYOTA Motor Philippines Corp. recently introduced the new premium compact sedan, the Vios, to the Philippine market.

Toyota's all-new vehicle boasts of a contemporary body design, a spacious interior, world-class safety features and a new engine powered by the VVT-i technology. With all its performance features and new stylish design, the Vios is targeted as a lifestyle vehicle for the young market. Toyota is also launching an aggressive marketing campaign for the Vios featuring the most famous celebrity today, Britney Spears.

Sporty look

The Vios, which means "to move forward," epitomizes the all-new attitude and concept behind Toyota's new compact sedan. It manifests the look, feel and performance of a modern vehicle and has been designed to fit and reflect the stylish and dynamic lifestyle of today's generation. The sleek multireflector headlamps and the front grille already add to the distinction of the Vios' youthful character.

Its all-new body design creates a sporty look while the accented door sections surrounding its tires and color-keyed side protection moldings emanate a fresh and yet, a classy design. Furthermore, sharply slanted rear fender and protruding rear bumpers provide the sporty profile to the Vios.

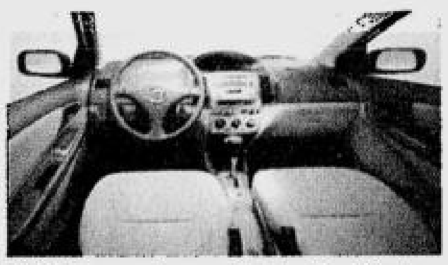
This all-new compact sedan offers state-of-the-art aerodynamic design that reduces wind noise, improves acceleration and maneuverability, and ensures better fuel efficiency. With a body design that yields a coefficient of drag (CD) of a low 0.30 similar to a Lexus GS300, the Vios promises a pleasurable driving experience.

The new Vios will be available in three variants—the 1.5G A/T, 1.5G M/T and the 1.3E M/T. Both 1500 and 1300 variants are powered by Toyota's VVT-i technology Variable Valve Timing with Intelligence.

Power features

With the VVT-i, the new Vios delivers higher power with its optimized valve timing that delivers powerful torque through low-to-medium engine rpms. The VVT-i engine also uses fuel more effectively keeping waste to a minimum, thus resulting to efficient combustion that lowers exhaust emissions.

The Vios is also integrated with Toyota's Super ECT (Electronic Controlled Technology) that allows the automatic transmission to adjust to one's driving style for increased power, optimal efficiency and comfort. Super ECT ensures high-efficiency gear train that provides enough torque capacity to handle the high power of the Vios' engine. It also delivers high-precision hydraulic control that optimizes smooth response to gear change.



EXTRA room is provided by the Vios to allow its driver to have high visibility and upright seating position.

Safety features

The Toyota Vios provides world-class safety features to all passengers by providing great visibility, child lock protection, and the latest in GOA (Global Outstanding Assessment) body, which are all critical to safe driving.

In addition to its overall performance in driving, turning, stopping and lane changing, the Vios' seats are designed to reduce fatigue and provide great visibility to the driver. Added safety features have been incorporated to this new Toyota. Its high-mount stop lamp ensures that the driver behind notices one's braking. Front foglamps are built for effective driving through rain or mist. Another safety feature is the Vios' Child Lock Protection that when activated, allows only door access from the outside and prevents it from accidentally being opened by child passengers.

Fundamental to passive safety is Toyota's world-renowned GOA body. This technology is tested at significantly more stringent standards that would guarantee safety to all passengers. Side-door impact beams are provided in all side doors for protection of occupants in case of a side impact.

Passengers are treated to the rich atmosphere and ample space the Vios offers. A spacious interior with an advanced "compact and tall" body shape concept coupled with its long wheelbase and ample height mean more than enough room inside this premium sedan. Extra room is provided by the Vios to allow its driver to have high visibility and upright seating position that ensures maximum comfort, ease of operation and clear visibility.

The new Vios' compact rear suspension and other refinements have resulted to a large-capacity trunk that gives enough space for more convenience. This compact sedan has a minimum turning radius of 4.9m that offers good maneuverability not only in narrow streets, but also in tight parking spaces.

The Vios' premium interior exudes modern style and class not found in any compact sedan reflecting a synergy of form and function. Metal accents in the center panel, A/T shift knob, and switch base to both driver's side and its opposite side complement the Vios' stylish two-tone gray interior. Its instrument panel features a rounded design and metallic accents that enhances its advanced, cool and premium ambience. Comfortable seats of the Vios have the same seat structure as the new Camry providing utmost comfort in any driving condition.

The new Vios is fully equipped with the latest in ergonomic design. The center digital meter with VFD (Vacuum Fluorescent Display) uses large numbers to provide an advanced image and greater visibility. VFD meters, in spite of their distance from the driver, are easier to read, which minimizes driver eye and head movement. The Vios' easy-to-operate audio system and simple dial-type controlled air-conditioning system are strategically placed for convenience and maximum comfort. The reliable TVSS (Toyota Vehicle Security System) is used with the keyless entry system. Also found in the new Vios are premium power features such as power outer mirrors, power windows and power door locks.

Other features

Also included are convenient pockets in handy places such as a large glove box, an upper tray that stores items like sunglasses and other items, a center console storage space that is provided to hold cellular phones while traveling, a center lower console box that stores up to 12 CDs, a large pocket located below the steering wheel, door pockets, front cup holders and rear cup holders that can fit any size of drink, and a seat back pocket on the passenger's side.

Rounding out the new features of the new Vios are different exciting body tones that are available to suit different characters. New colors like silver steel, ember, subtle gold, xtreme black, scarlet fury and rave blue are now available for the different variants of the Vios.

The Vios will be available in all Toyota authorized dealers by the first week of June.

What's the score in the 'Battle of the Giants'?

FULL TANK
Al Mendoza

WHILE I eagerly await the first reports of the "Battle of the Giants," I also wait with bated breadth the next move of the "Other Giants."

Of course, the "Battle of the Giants" that I am referring to is the clash between the Toyota Vios and the new Honda City.

To those not yet in the know, Toyota launched last week the Vios, a futuristic car designed to combat the latest edition of the City, Honda's all-time bestseller.

* * *

I can't wait to hear the score in the first quarter of their renewed battle for turf supremacy.

Honda has always been a strong contender for the crown in the compact car category mainly because the City has consistently posted big margins both in the Big City and in the countryside.

But since Toyota's Altis broke through with record-breaking sales the last two years, the competition has taken new twists and turns. Seemingly, Honda came up with the new City if only to counter the impact of Toyota's mighty rally through the Altis.

* * *

I noticed though that unlike Toyota, Honda has remained steadfast in its stand not to use high-impact personalities to push its new product.

For, while Toyota unleashed Hollywood heartthrob Brad Pitt to endorse the Altis two years ago, which definitely caused a big stir in the motoring industry, Honda maintained its traditional stance of simply relying on the merits of its car to attract customers. Or does Honda just refuse to be branded a copycat that it elected to maintain that time-tested ego of originality?

Whatever, Toyota is riding on the crest of the Pitt-powered Altis by signing up anew an internationally known crooner, the music pop icon Britney Spears, to endorse the new Toyota Vios. Whether successful again or enough with that move, Toyota seems to want it known that Altis made it "through the night" with big help from Brad Pitt, the idol of Ariel de Jesus.

* * *

And who are the "Other Giants" again?

First among them, of course, is Mitsubishi. Although I must emphasize here that Mitsubishi has always been almost co-equal with Toyota and Honda on matters of control of the economic handlebar. In fact, Mitsubishi has had much success in the not-too-distant past for its innovativeness, like the one it churned out recently in which the model had either a manual for a transmission or automatic at the same time. Such creativity of the first degree needs applauding.

Nissan was like that, too, not too long ago—always a force to reckon with in terms of market domination. But radical changes in leadership at Nissan, occasioned by the entry of some big wigs from Taiwan that somehow stunned the market forces not used to having Taiwanese as rivals, produced some turbulent times for the one-time No. 2 carmaker of Japan. It is from the ashes of that man-made fire that Nissan is trying to rebound from the pits; its new Nissan Sentra has been doing fairly well, I heard.

* * *

The other members of the "Other Giants" insofar as the car category is concerned include Hyundai and Ford. Hyundai's Matrix, I heard, has been creating an impact. Ford's Lynx is just "hanging in there."

I left out BMW, Volvo, the Mercedes-Benz and Jaguar as these are high-end players, meaning they are more of the luxury type than average-income family vehicles. As much as I want to own any one of those, particularly the Volvo, I cannot afford it; I am not in the league of Bonjin Bolinao (a proud Volvo owner to which Lyn Manalansang is doubly prouder of). At this stage, I can only dream about it, of owning it. I haven't even driven a Jaguar yet. Some good-hearted guys, like Bobby Coyuito, have offered to lend their Jaguars. Each time, though, I refused—politely. I might get used to driving it and that could produce a mountain of problems.

You know, fantasy has its own magical way of drowning out realities. The reality is, until I win the lotto, I won't be able to buy a Volvo.

* * *

CHEERS. Here's a glass to Leo Dolendo of Isuzu Pasig. He has quickly acted on "the problem" of Dennis Balajadia regarding his dream vehicle that is the Isuzu Trooper. Dennis' in-law, Elmer Yanga of RFM, is grateful for that, Leo... Also to Toyota Cubao for that instant attention to the plight of Bobby Acosta, whose Altis was taken care of pronto with just one dial of the phone. Oftentimes, it is in the after-sale service that the true worth of a vehicle dealership is measured.

JEERS. There is this nagging controversy about EWDs (early warning device) being allegedly sold by LTO personnel in complete violation of government laws. I agree that the EWD is needed to safeguard lives whenever a vehicle is stalled on the road. But if its acquisition will provide illegal business to LTO as some sectors allege, then it's a no-no to the motoring public. The emission test is a big enough burden already to our motorists, what with its exorbitant fee before one could register one's vehicle. Add the cost of an EWD and that's like dealing our motorists a double whammy.

* * *

QUOTE ME. Do you know that Russia invented the first lavatory for airplanes? But my dream, though, is to see an airplane with lavatories for both male and female passengers. Will Philippine Airlines take the lead on this?

Space Gear flaunts features in coming-out party

By Tessa Salazar

IT'S the latest in a line of rival family haulers: the QRV Serena, the Chevy Venture, the Starex, the CR-V and the Chrysler Town & Country. The new Mitsubishi Space Gear aims to outdo its competitors in the light commercial vehicle category.

Suffice to say the manufacturer of the newest Space Gear, which was launched May 17 at the Le Pavillon on Roxas Boulevard in Manila, didn't mind the coldness accorded by motoring writers present amid the fireworks, floating dancers in silver overalls, entertainment numbers, lavish raffle prizes and all that jazz, as long as media people get to see its features.

The 2003 Space Gear's front is highlighted by the new grille and new headlamp design. It has new rear combination headlamps and new front and rear bumpers.

The Space Gear has a new high roof design for better interior headroom. It has dual sliding doors, 15-inch aerodynamic alloy wheels fitted on 215/65R15 radial tires.

The Space Gear has a new 2.4-liter 4G64 multipoint injected 16-valve engine (which yields a maximum output of 132 PS @ 5,500 rpm and 19.6 kg-m @ 2,500 rpm of torque). The 4-speed AT is electronically controlled overdrive.

Comfort features include a side armrest for the driver seat and center armrests for second and third row seats. For a more relaxed ride, it has front double wishbone and 5-link coil spring rear suspensions with stabilizer bars.

THE NEW 2003 Space Gear

Power windows, door locks and power side mirrors are additional comfort features.

This family hauler is equipped with a 10.4-inch LCD monitor. The video monitor, said to be the biggest video monitor equipped in a vehicle, is big enough, however, to block the driver's rear-view mirror.

The entertainment system includes a Kenwood single in-dash CD/VCD player and four-speaker system. AM and FM stereo is enhanced by glass printed antenna on the rear quarter glass of the van.

The Space Gear also comes with an alarm system, keyless entry and engine immobilizer. It even has a rear underview mirror, rear accessory socket for portable equipment, rear intermittent wiper with washer and full all-around standard matting.

THE BIGGEST video monitor equipped in a vehicle

Priced at P1,090,000, the new 2003 Space Gear is set to increase the sales of Mitsubishi in the light commercial vehicle category.

BMW'S ultimate sports activity vehicle

From page C1

in the rear of this four-door, five-seater SAV. The leather seats front and rear are firm and supportive, but the ride quality of the X5 4.6 is stiff, sometimes bouncy. The air-conditioning system provides rear-seat area ventilation while the driver and front seat passenger can select their individual temperature settings. Manually operated rear side-window shades help the aircon in keeping the interior cool and comfortable.

Premium thirst

One inconvenience in the X5 4.6 is the absence of cupholders. Another is the location of the CD changer in the cargo area which, by the way, is not as spacious as other SUVs'. The biggest inconvenience of all is the drain on your wallet caused by the 4.6's thirst for premium (Blaze or Velocity only, please) gasoline which BMW claims to average 6.7 km per liter in combined highway and city driving, but which has been independently observed at 5.9 km per liter.

But when it comes to safety features, the X5 leads. Aside from AWD (all-wheel drive) and ABS (anti-lock braking system), the X5 4.6is has six airbags: front torso side airbags, front head-protection side airbags and rear head-protection side airbags. Keyless entry and an alarm system that monitors even interior movement are standard.

Visually, you could never mistake the X5 for cheaper sport utes like the Ford Expedition or the Nissan Patrol because of its distinctive BMW badge and front grille, not to mention its refined Euro-stylish lines. Neither a daunting 4x4 off-roader nor a roomy family carriage, the X5 4.6is is more of an executive sport machine for the discerning class that can afford its P11.3 million price tag. With that money, you can opt for a BMW 745Li with rear TV, but who wants to be caught dead in a limo when you can carom around town and country in BMW's ultimate sports activity vehicle?

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: A boiled egg in the morning is hard to beat.

The jeepney and its intriguing ancestry

By A.J. Makalintal
Contributor

(Last of 2 parts)

THE APPETITE of Filipinos, whetted by the initial release of surplus US Army jeeps, remained unsatisfied. Thus began a steadily increasing importation of surplus jeeps and other vehicles from the various surplus disposal depots in Europe, Okinawa and other areas.

Perhaps the most important of these were the surplus yards in Amsterdam, known at the time as the center of surplus vehicle disposal in Europe. Swiss, Belgian, German, French, British and Dutch Army surplus vehicles ended up in Manila.

Naturally, all of these jeeps required spare parts for repair and replacement purposes. Because of this, there grew an equally thriving business of importing spare parts from various surplus disposal yards of the US Army into the country. Of interest was Champion Auto Supply, which specialized in military vehicle parts.

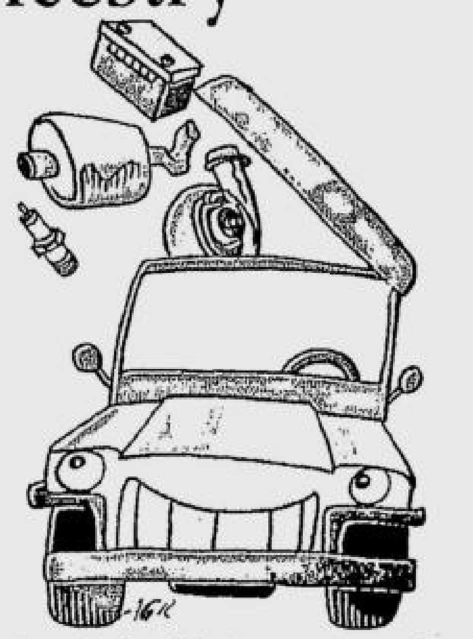
But the jeep part that suffered the most in our tropical high-humidity environment was the body, and the body was quite rare and difficult to obtain. Thus, several companies began to manufacture body parts and panels via stamping, which was the way the original supplier of Willys and Ford did it. Foremost among these entrepreneurs were the M. D. Juan group (the descendant of the aforementioned Champion Auto Supply), Vicente Automotive, and much later, Genmarc. Of the three, only the M. D. Juan group remains, and the quality of the machine-stamped bodies that it produces are well-respected by military jeep restorers all over the world.

Pinoy jeep pioneer

Today, the product line of M.D. Juan includes a large number of parts, panels and accessories, as well as complete bodies of virtually all the jeep models (with the exception of the M151 series).

In fact, the country is already well-known for its historical jeep restoration worldwide, thanks to the pioneering efforts of Maximino "Minong" Dionisio Juan, or M.D. Juan, founder of MD Juan Enterprises Inc. which was able to create a global niche by being the only source in Southeast Asia of historically accurate, hard-to-find jeeps and jeep replacement parts.

Now run by the second and third generation, M. D. Juan maintains the largest network in the international market. Right now, the Philippines remains one of the most fertile grounds for jeep surplus buyers from Australia, Europe and the US.



Back home, collectors and restorers of jeeps in the Philippines continue to increase and proliferate. Jeep clubs now exist in Bulacan, Pampanga, Cebu and Davao, to name a few. Even now, restored jeeps continue to command high prices, and jeep restorers have discovered that their passion for restoration can also be a financially rewarding hobby.

A conservative estimate of, say, P100,000 invested in restoring a jeep can produce profit that is double that figure as a newly restored jeep can command a price of P200,000. Indeed, restorers have been having a grand time earning from the hobby they love doing the most.

The hobbyists' group

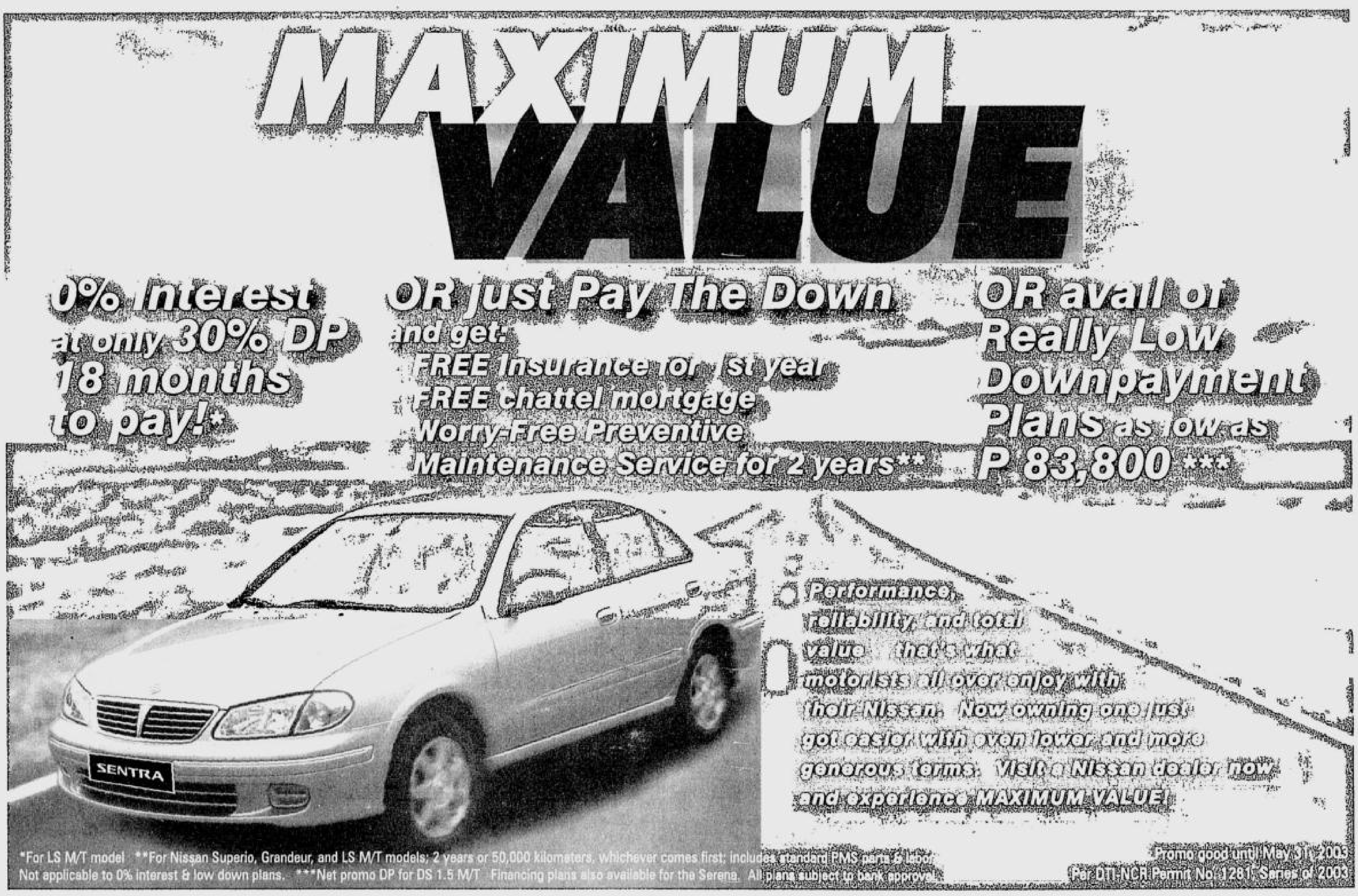
For those interested to learn more about jeep restoration, a newly founded nonprofit organization can help you out. It is called the Philippine Jeep Preservation Foundation that aims to promote not only jeep restoration as more than a hobby, but also as a historical activity that Filipinos can be proud of.

The organization has members who are jeep restorers, hobbyists and enthusiasts, and beginning or continuing hobbyists can get in touch with them through the organization. It is located at 1951 Taft Ave., Pasay City 1300, with Tel. No. 522-5165.

Rebirth of cool

Still unconvinced of the jeepney's legacy? Then perhaps it's time for you to discover the original jeep, and how restoration can do wonders as a hobby and as a business venture. Not to mention that these jeeps are considered "cool" by motorists.

Just look at the jeeps used in Hollywood films, from original WWII replicas in Pearl Harbor to the modern-day prototypes in films like "Jurassic Park." Indeed, the jeep has come a long way.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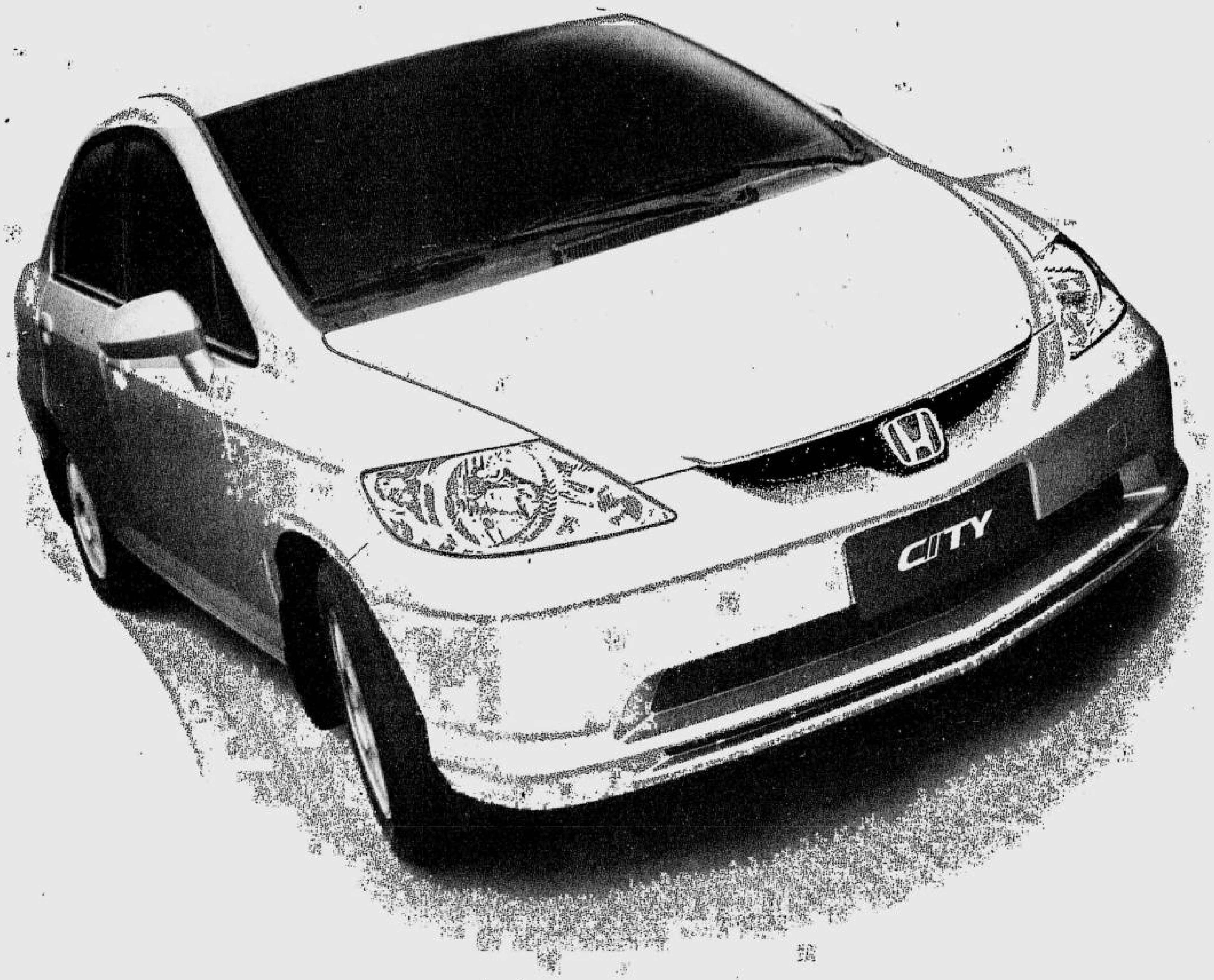

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One-dish wonders for busy cooks

By Dorothy MJ Ferreria
Contributor

SUMMER vacation is about to end. In less than a month, a new school year begins. Mothers are now busy enrolling their kids and this naturally entails taking time to check the kids' school uniforms if they still fit, purchasing textbooks and school supplies, etc. Suddenly, laid back schedules have become hectic, leaving little time left for preparing meals. So here are Asian recipe ideas that are doable given tight schedules. These are one-dish meals that are nutritious and delicious as well. *(For the weekly menu, turn to p. 2.)*

> Rice toppings are great on days when the kitchen is the last place you want to be

Kamameshi Rice

2 c local jasmine rice, soaked in water for 1 hour
1/3 c soy sauce
2 tbsp rice wine
1 tbsp corn oil
1 tsp sesame oil
1 tbsp white sugar
1/8 tsp ground black pepper
1 tsp fine salt
4 pcs chicken thighs, skinned, deboned and cubed
2-4 pcs dried shiitake mushrooms, softened and sliced into strips
2 c water
½ c string beans, sliced thinly diagonally
½ c finely chopped carrots
2 eggs, cooked scrambled style, sliced into thin strips
1/3 cup sliced spring onions or shredded leeks

Drain the rice. Transfer to a rice cooker. Stir in the soy sauce, the rice wine, corn oil, sesame oil, sugar, black pepper, salt, chicken and shiitake mushrooms. Pour in the water. Activate the rice cooker.

As soon as the rice cooker indicates that the rice is done, test the rice for doneness. Add ¼ cup of water if necessary. Stir in the string beans and the carrots. Cover and let stand for 5 minutes. Transfer to a serving platter and garnish with scrambled eggs and spring onions.

Nasi Goreng

(*Indonesian Fried Rice*)

¼ c corn oil
1 tbsp well-pounded garlic
½ c chopped onions
½ c chopped carrots
¼ kg (250 g) pork (*lomo* or *kasim*), chopped
1½ tsp curry powder
1 tsp bottled chili garlic sauce
1 tbsp soy sauce
1/3 to ½ c water to cook pork
3 c cooked rice
1 c frozen green peas
2 tsp fine salt
freshly ground black pepper to taste
2 eggs, cooked scrambled style, sliced into strips
¼ c chopped spring onions
¼ c spring of wansoy

Heat up the corn oil and the butter in a large wok over medium flame. Saute the garlic until it becomes fragrant. Add the onions and the carrots and continue to saute until the onions are transparent. Add the pork

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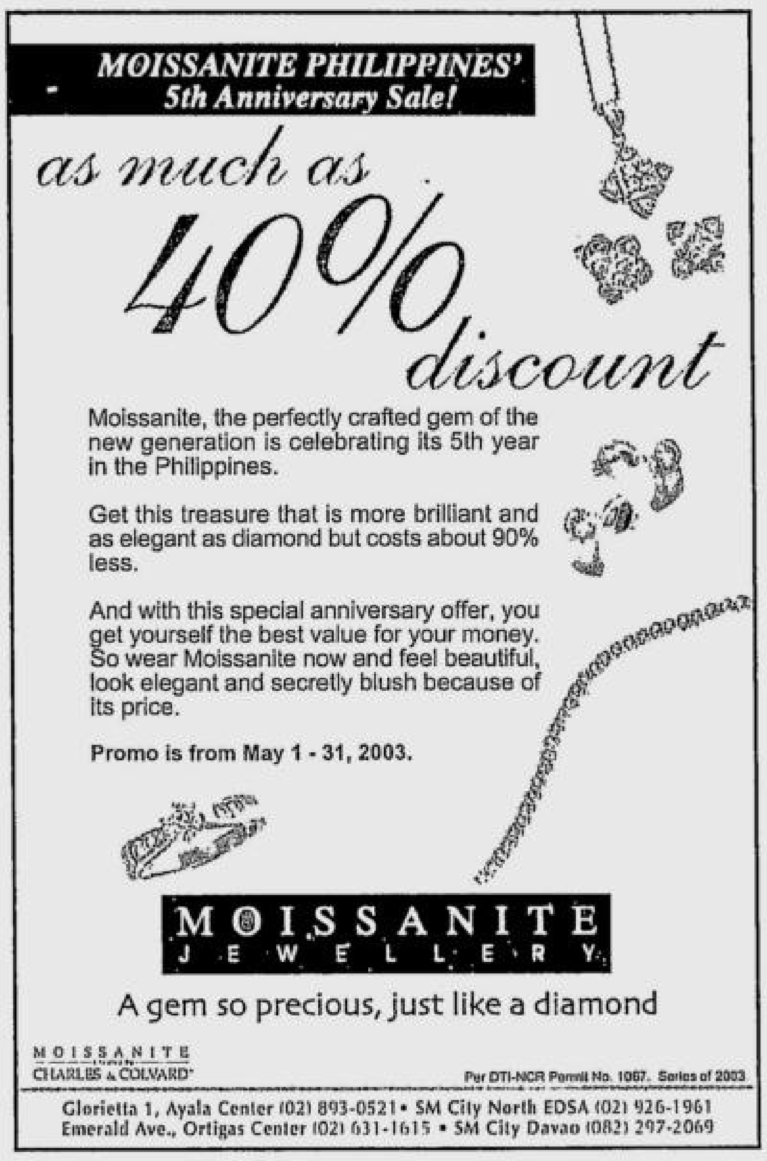
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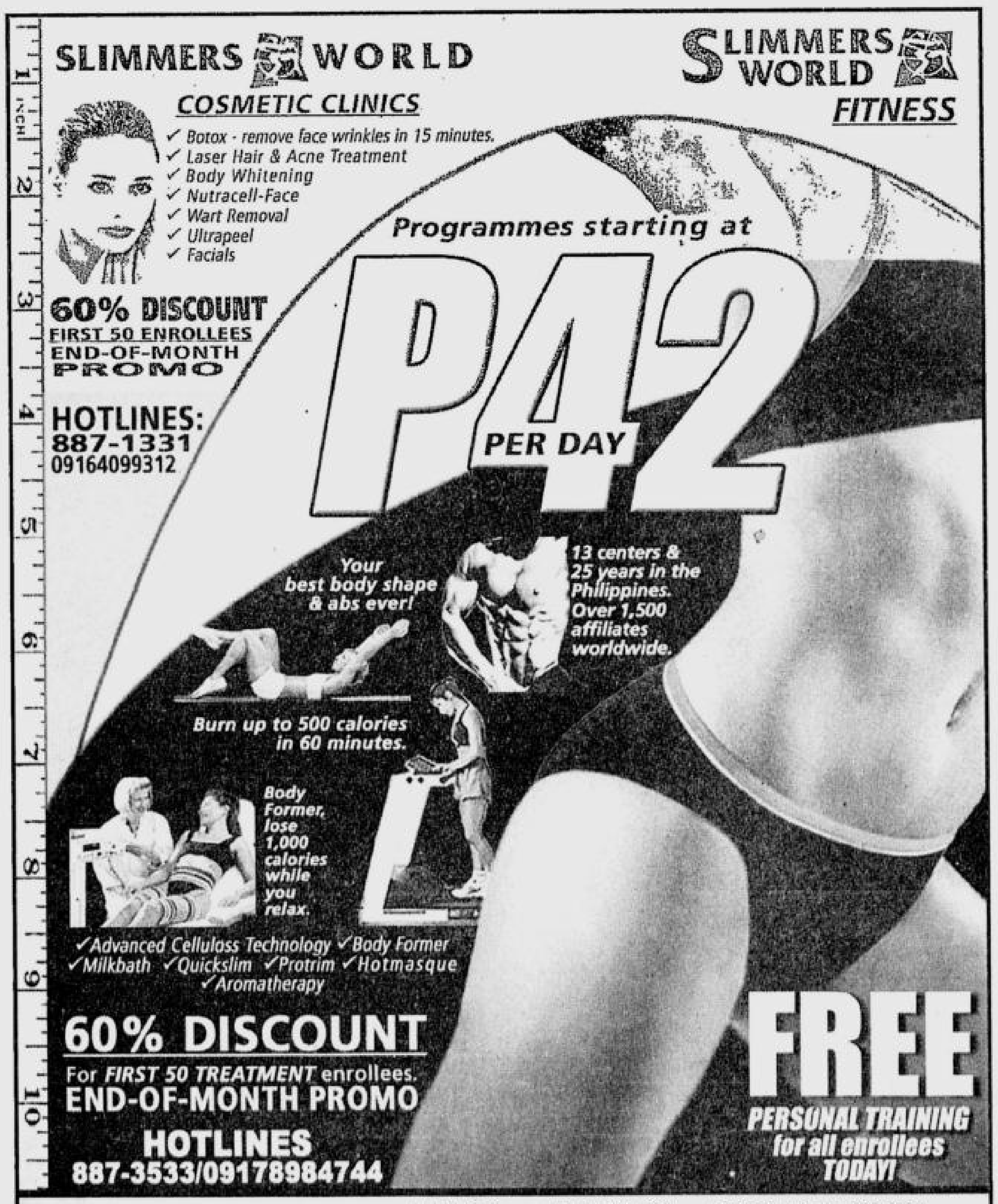
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Malnutrition among Senior Citizens

Is Papa malnourished? How to tell

2nd of 5 parts

One Sunday lunch with the family, 74-year old Papa looked thinner, his polo shirt seemed unusually loose. Although his children wanted to dismiss the observation, the truth was, Papa was a bit pale too, especially his mouth and lips.

Right before their eyes, Papa was showing signs of malnutrition. His children brought him to the doctor, fearing these signs could easily have serious health consequences.

A Closer Look at Papa

When a caregiver is with your loved one everyday, it is possible not to notice the signs of malnutrition until the symptoms have become more evident in a matter of months.

To help determine if Papa or Mama is already showing the effects of their poor eating habits and poor nutritional intake, caregivers must watch out for the following physical signs:

- Weight loss
- Muscle wasting (decrease in size of muscle tissue)
- Clothes now seem to have a looser fit
- Obesity
- Pale lips and mouth
- Cracks around the mouth
- Thinning of hair
- Sunken eyes
- Loved one seems confused but doesn't have Alzheimer's disease
- Wounds take longer to heal / chronic infection
- Loss of balance
- Pressure ulcer (otherwise known as bed sore)
- Presence of edema (a swelling of the legs/feet due to excess water retention)
- Lack of energy; apathy

Consequences of prolonged malnutrition

The heart becomes weaker

Immune system is less able to protect against infection

Intestines are less able to absorb the nutrients that are ingested

Delayed healing of wounds

Increased risk of pressure sores

Loss of muscle strength

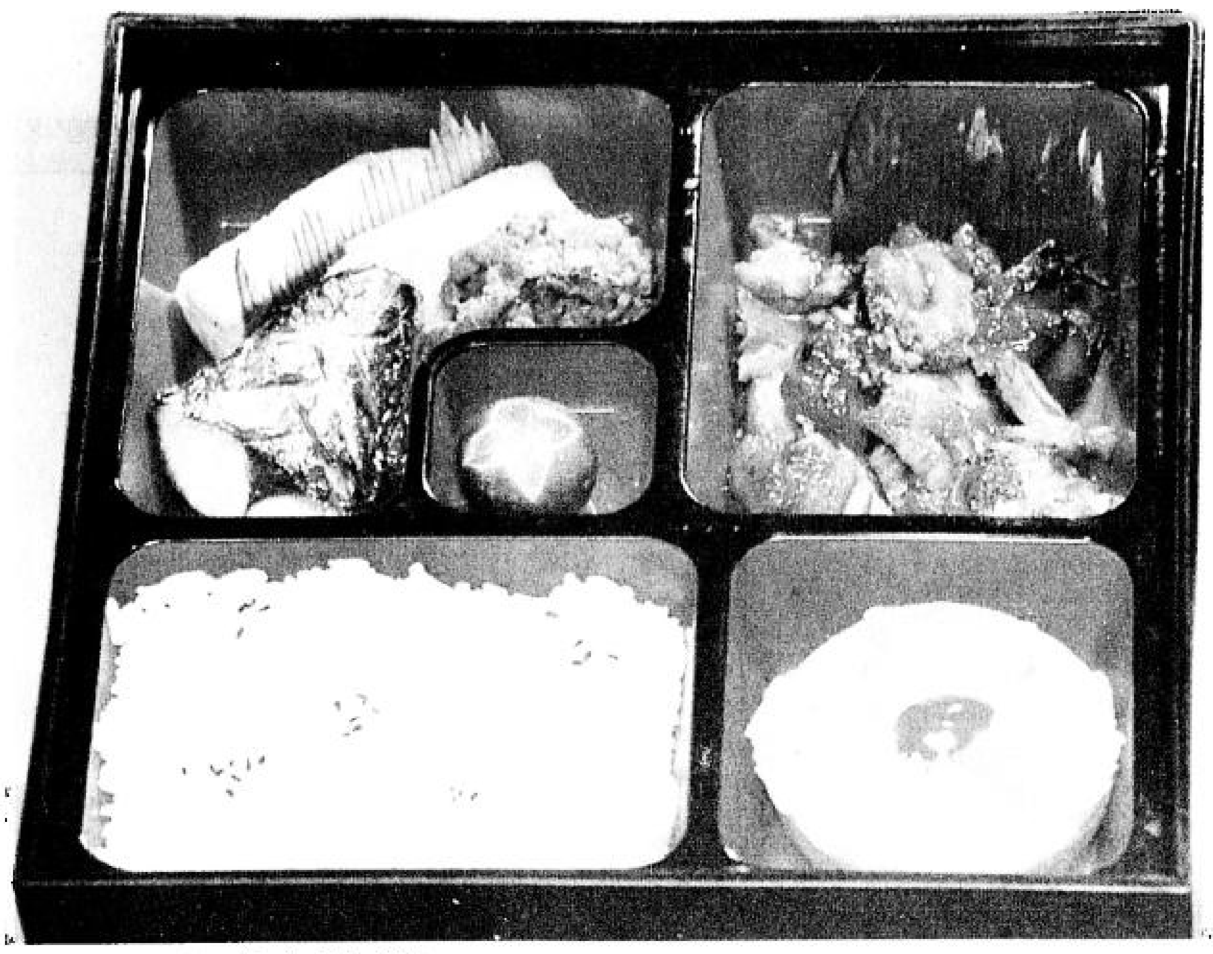
Increased complications after surgery (e.g. sepsis, wound infection, pneumonia)

In this case, Papa's malnutrition was treated, his mineral imbalances were corrected, his caloric intake normalized. He was given complete oral meal replacement for a more balanced nutrition.

It pays to be suspicious of loved ones who show weight loss, display fatigue and most of the other signs of malnutrition so you can help them gain back a healthier life.

Help your senior loved ones regain a healthier life. Heed the signs of malnutrition and consult your doctor about Ensure - the complete and balanced oral meal replacement.

ADVT.



CHICKEN Teriyaki and Saba Shioyaki Bento

Bento-go is an idea whose time has come, according to Paul Cuenca of Zen

Boxed out

Text by Rowena C. Burgos
Photos by Randy Hormillosa

PAUL Cuenca, who is in charge of Zen Restaurant's business development and marketing, strongly believes that the market for *bento*—artistically arranged Japanese foods that are served in black-lacquered boxes—is booming.

Bento, which can be either an inexpensive, healthy meal for those on the run or an exotic upscale offering, is fun to look at and to eat. Equally important, it offers chefs an interesting medium in which to present a variety of foods.

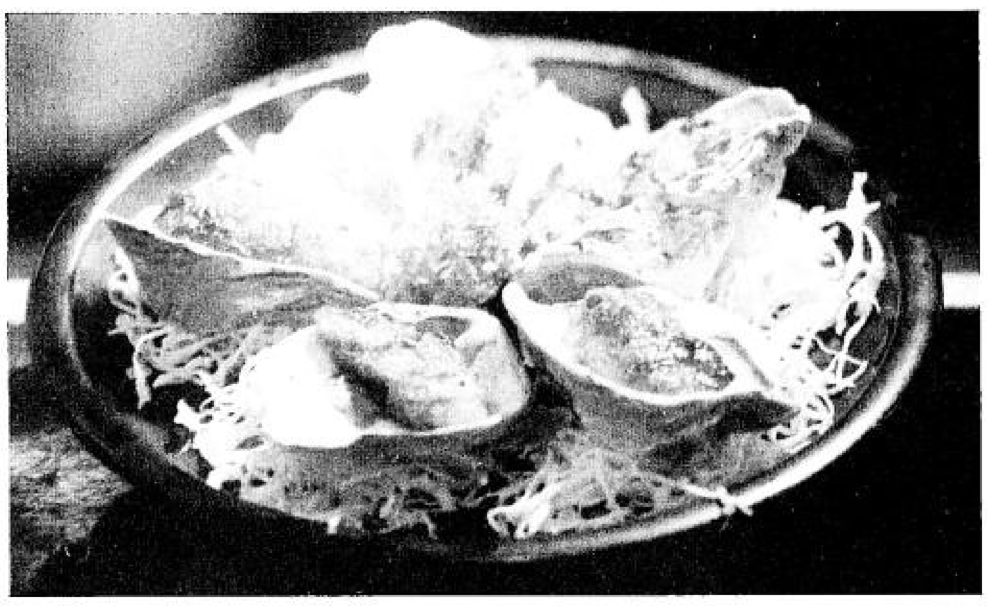
In Japan, the term *bento* describes a variety of items that range from the lunch a child brings to school to boxed, diverse fare served in train stations and opera houses to beautiful foods presented in black boxes in high-end restaurants.

PAUL Cuenca

In any of its incarnations, *bento* has become so popular that Zen at Glorietta 3 in Makati, recently introduced its *bento* box delivery service called Bento-Go (Bento box on the move).

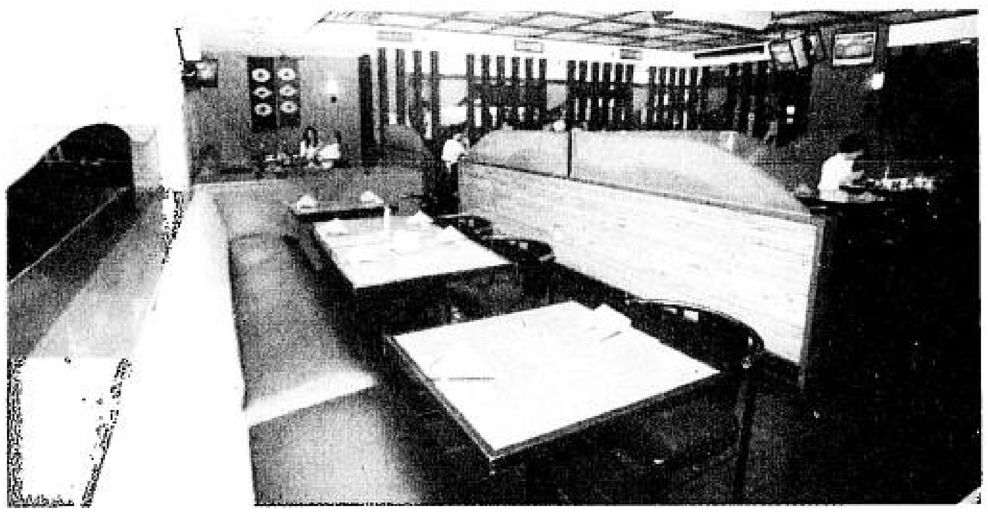
"Zen's bento-go is not your typical delivery food like pizza, hamburgers and Chinese food. It's not messy and can be cleared away easily. There is no plastic or paper bag to throw away. Only the best ingredients are used. And it's on call all day for six days a week and delivered within 45 minutes," Cuenca said.

The delivery menu can be sent by fax or e-mail. Zen also caters for business functions and other special occasions.



OYSTER with Ponzu Sauce

GRILLED Tofu with Teriyaki Sauce



A JAPANESE architect designed the 800-sq m Zen in Makati

Lacquered delivery

Zen's food is delivered in a lacquer box that contains appetizer, rice and salad, soup, two dishes and dessert. If the delivery is over 20 orders, a waiter will bring them and help in serving and cleaning up after the meal.

Bento combinations, priced from P225 to P450, include Sashimi and Sushi Combo, Salmon and California Roll, Chicken Teriyaki and Saba Shioyaki, Gindara and Ebi Tempura, Salmon Teriyaki and Yariika Teppan, Tekka Maki and Seafood Teppan, Agedashi Tofu and Yasai Tempura, Chicken Teriyaki and Saikoro Steak, Tori Steak and Tonkatsu, Tofu Steak and Tori Karaage, Yasai Maki and Shiitake Tempura.

Another feature of the menu are the Sushi Platters that come in different combinations of sushi, sashimi and maki that vary from 20 to 81 pieces per order.

"Bento-go is primarily targeted to the corporate market that regularly has meetings during lunch and dinner," Cuenca said.

Bento-go operates within the Makati area but also accepts orders outside Makati with a required lead time of at least three hours.

Cuenca believes that Filipinos are poised to gobble up this healthful fast-food possibility. "The wonderful thing about *bento* is that it's like having several courses in one meal. Guests enjoy the strong visual aspect of the *bento* box. The black background really makes the food stand out," he explained.

Seafood-rich cuisine

For nine years now, Zen Restaurant has been making the seafood-rich cuisine more in tune with Filipino palates, incorporating fresh ingredients and exciting presentations.

For many Filipinos, Japanese food, including sushi, has reached a high level of acceptance. And at Zen, chefs see modern Japanese cuisine as a new challenge. "It presents abundant room for growth," Cuenca said.

And with artful presentations, Cuenca said, Zen's chefs can play up the sensuality of Japanese food.

Cuenca takes pride in the quality and freshness of their sushi (nigiri, makimono/temaki, sashimi, sushi chef's special, chirashi and designer rolls).

Zen's a la carte menu includes teppanyaki, seafoods, yakimono, agemono, nabemono, menrui, appetizer, gohanmono, salada and nimono.

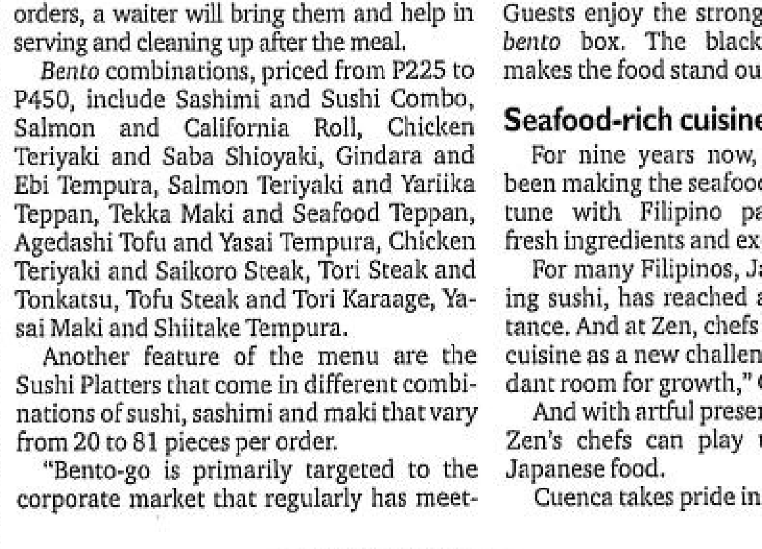
For the health-conscious, Zen offers its vegetarian fare like agedashi tofu, steamed asparagus and vegetable kushiage.

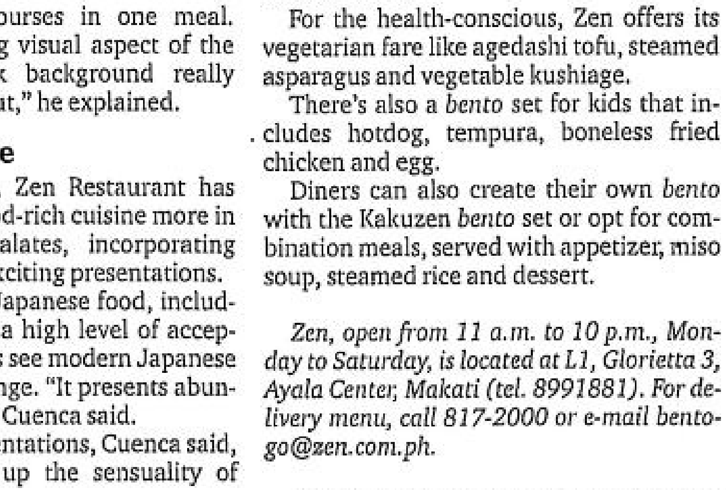
There's also a *bento* set for kids that includes hotdog, tempura, boneless fried chicken and egg.

Diners can also create their own *bento* with the Kakuzen *bento* set or opt for combination meals, served with appetizer, miso soup, steamed rice and dessert.

Zen, open from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., Monday to Saturday, is located at L1, Glorietta 3, Ayala Center, Makati (tel. 8991881). For delivery menu, call 817-2000 or e-mail bento-go@zen.com.ph.

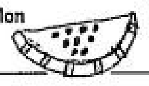
E-mail the author at rburgos@inquirer.com.ph

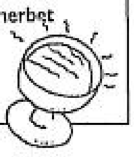


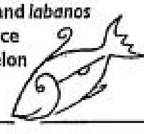


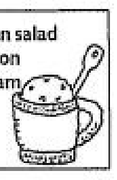
SEA Urchin Wrapped in Nori and Perilla Sauce (left) and Halibut Teriyaki (top)

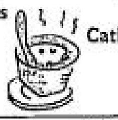
	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
MONDAY	Cereal with milk and sliced bananas Pandesal Coco jam Coffee or Fruit juice	Chicken *tinola* with green papaya and *sili* leaves Rice Mangoes Ala Mode	Fried fish with sweet and sour sauce Rice Fruit gelatin
TUESDAY	Omelet with corned beef Rice Coffee, Hot chocolate and Fruit juice	Pork *adobo* with quail eggs and fried garlic Rice Mango refrigerator cake	Instant cream of mushroom soup Turbo roast chicken Rice Avocado with sugar and milk
WEDNESDAY	Oatmeal Bread Butter and Fruit jam Coffee, Hot chocolate and Fruit juice	Fried *daing na bangus* Green mango salad Rice Chilled watermelon	Nasi Goreng Canned fruit cocktail with crushed ice
THURSDAY	Hotdog Bread Butter or mayonnaise Cheddar cheese Coffee, Hot chocolate or Fruits shake	Clear soup Pancit canton Store bought *pichi pichi*	Pot roast with gravy Potato salad *Buko* sherbet
FRIDAY	Fried egg sunny side up Garlic rice Beef *tapa* Coffee, Hot chocolate or Fruit juice	*Sinigang na bangus* with *kangkong* and *labanos* Rice Melon	Tossed green salad Katsudon Ice cream
SATURDAY	Hotcake with butter and maple syrup Bacon Coffee, Hot chocolate or Fruit juice	Kamameshi rice Almond jelly with lychees	Beef steak Filipino Rice Blueberry cheesecake
SUNDAY	Garlic Rice *Tocino* *Achara* Salted eggs and tomatoes Coffee, Hot chocolate or Fruit juice	Tossed green salad Paella Valenciana Brazo de mercedes	Clear soup Pork *menudo* Rice Cathedral windows











ILLUSTRATIONS: STEPH BRAVO

One-dish wonders . . .

From page D1

and sauce until the pork changes color. Quickly stir in the curry powder, the chili garlic sauce and the soy sauce. Pour in 1/3 cup water and allow to boil. Lower the flame and stir from time to time allowing the pork to cook. Add more water if necessary.

As soon as the pork is done, add the rice, the peas, the salt and the pepper. Mix well. Transfer to a serving platter and garnish with eggs, spring onions and wansoy. Serve immediately.

Katsudon

(*Japanese Porkchop Rice Topping*)

½ kg porkshop
Marinade:
1 tbsp soy sauce
2 tbsp calamansi juice
2 tsp well-pounded garlic
black pepper to taste
Breading:
all purpose flour
beaten egg
Japanese breadcrumbs(*panko*)
oil for frying
Sauce:
¼ c soy sauce
¼ c rice wine
¾ c water
2 tbsp white sugar
½ c chopped onions
½ c chopped leeks or spring onions
2 pcs dried shiitake mushrooms, soaked in water until plump, rinsed and sliced into thin strips
2 eggs, beaten
freshly cooked rice
garnishing
steamed *chicharo* (sweet pea in pods) or chopped spring onions

Rinse the porkchops in running water. Pat dry. Trim off the skin and the bones. Set aside for soup stock or other recipes. Pound both sides of the meat with the back of a knife to tenderize. Marinate for 15 to 30 minutes.

Working with a piece at a time, coat the pork with flour, dip in beaten egg and the roll in Japanese breadcrumbs. Deep-fry until golden brown. Slice into ½-inch strips. Set aside.

To prepare the sauce, combine the following ingredients in a saucepan—soy sauce, rice, water, sugar, onions, leeks and shiitake mushrooms. Place over medium heat and allow to boil. Simmer for a few seconds just to remove the raw taste of onions. Beat the eggs well with a fork. Turn off the heat and add the eggs to the mixture in thin streams while mixing the mixture vigorously with a fork.

To assemble, spoon an adequate amount of rice in a bowl. Add 2 to 3 spoonfuls of sauce. Top with fried pork chop. Again spoon about 2 spoonfuls of the prepared sauce. Garnish with *chicharo* or spring onions.

Note: Traditional Katsudon calls for adding the fried porkchop into the sauce before adding the beaten eggs. The procedure described above is more practical so as to maintain the crispiness of the breading.

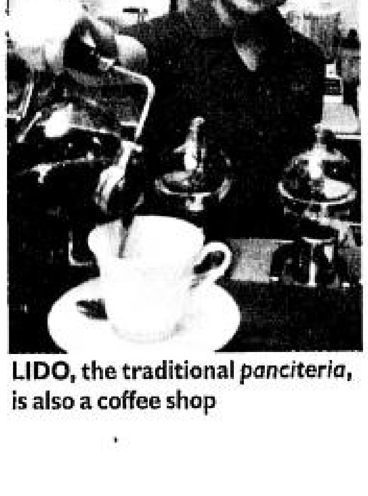
Dorothy MJ Ferreria offers cooking classes at Dorothy's Cooking School at 48 Third Street, New Manila, Quezon City. Call 721-7735.

67-year-old restaurant opens new branch

PANCITERIA Lido, one of the most enduring restaurants in the country, has opened a branch at the Madison Square branch, Greenhills, Ortigas Avenue.

Lido invited some of its loyal patrons, representing three generations. The 67-year-old restaurant, which opened in 1936 on T. Alonzo, Binondo, is now open for franchising.

Lido is known for its *pancit* and *pugon*-roasted *asado*, among other things. It has launched its own line of coffee concoctions. For franchise inquiries, call 733-5260/6839.



LIDO, the traditional *panciteria*, is also a coffee shop

Little girl losing her savings

THE CONSUMER

Marietta Velasco Giron

M.V. Lotivo convinced her 4-year-old daughter to save her Christmas cash gifts in the bank. One year later, the bank increased the average maintaining balance from P5,000 to P10,000. When she accompanied her daughter to the bank to deposit the latest cash gifts, Lotivo found out that the bank had been deducting P100 from the account for the last 12 months as penalty charges for failure to meet the average maintaining deposit. It was an ITF (In-Trust-For) account.

"I complained to the bank manager that we were not notified. No phone calls. No letters. I added that [even] if they posted signs in the bank premises, we didn't see them since we seldom went there during banking hours. Since we were not officially informed, it was only right that the charges were reversed. Had we been informed, we could have easily added to the deposit to meet the required maintaining balance," Lotivo griped.

She added that it wasn't reasonable to require children, below 7 at that, to meet the excessively high maintaining balance. "How do I explain to my daughter that the bank took her money instead of [letting it earn] interest? How can she, and other children, realize the value of saving money in the bank?"

Lotivo appealed her daughter's case with the customer service unit and the company's sales director. But the bank refused to reverse charges. She asked, "How come the bank can contact me when my time deposit matures?" Lotivo wanted her daughter's case published to warn parents and young depositors and so that the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas could do something the problem.

(This columnist forwarded a copy of Lotivo's letter to the Bank of Philippine Islands for comment.)

More banking woes

Credit card collectors are not doing the industry any good by harassing creditors who fail to pay on time. Here are more feedback from readers:

· Van M. Vergara wrote that one of his officemates couldn't meet the deadline for his credit card payment. Credit card collectors, when unable to talk to the cardholder, pestered Vergara and other officemates with persistent rude telephone calls.

Vergara wrote: "Unfortunately, my officemate works in the field, and I happen to get the calls of the collectors. One particular collector called almost every day and would pressure me to identify myself. One time, when I refused, he asked 10 times, 'What's your name, what's your name...?' The collectors haven't stopped harassing me and my other officemates."

C. Flores of Labangon, Cebu City, said he could relate to the experience of reader Louie Santos of Morong, Rizal, in the hands of abusive credit card collectors (*"Harassment by credit card collectors," PDI Lifestyle, 04/10/03*).

He said rude collectors, who claimed to be with Citibank, would call his house even at unholy hours telling members of his family to pay his bill. The collectors also pestered his officemates and revealed the amount of his unpaid dues.

Flores (a government employee) listed the threats he got from ruthless collectors: that he would be blacklisted in all banks, nationwide; he would be arrested by agents of the National Bureau of Investigation in his office; his properties would be sequestered through property attachments; the Civil Service Commission, and the Central Office director would be informed of his unpaid dues; a subpoena will be issued for his arrest by the Regional Trial Court of Pasig for estafa, etc.

He concluded: "Banks should make it easy for creditors to pay their dues, not hire ruthless credit card collectors who have no regard for the consumers' right to privacy nor [have] good manners and right conduct." (Citibank's comments and actions on complaints will be published in next week's column.)

Ann Loyola of Tandang Sora, QC, commented: "The 10-percent VAT added to credit card charges is unfair to us card holders who are already paying 3-3.5 percent monthly compounded interest on our dues. This additional burden will also encumber consumers' home loans, car loans, etc. transacted through the banking institution."

Debtor's woe

A reader is in distress over the skyrocketing interest on her father's unpaid dues. Her father, she said, could not pay the minimum amount of the charges because he had been jobless for over two years. The principal amount involved was P47,000.

She wrote: "I went to the bank in March on my father's account, to plead for a compromise and apply for amnesty to stop the interest from ballooning. I had surrendered his credit card. Two weeks later the bank wrote to say that it could only stop the interest from accruing, if we paid P12,000 in interest. Based on that, we owe the bank now P19,000 in interest (payments)! They have told me there was no other way but to pay up."

Readers' praises

Ria Berbano (berby_096@yahoo.com) sent to us her compiled complaints (Consumer Woes) and her praises (Consumer Wows). Here is an item under the Consumer Wows (we will publish the other items from time to time):

"I commend Globe Telecom for setting up a booth in Glorietta, Makati, to upgrade prepaid SIM cards with greater phonebook memory and message-storage capacity for only P175! Stored phonebook entries and inbox messages are retained in the new SIM. Furthermore, subscribers get to keep the old cell phone number. This innovation is truly a delight to prepaid subscribers."

E-mail the author at mgiron@i-manila.com.ph or lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Tasteful offerings range from risotto to burgers

DINING OUT

EDSA Shangri-La's Paparazzi offers a taste of Tuscany until May 26. Specialties include Black Risotto, Crazy Water Soup, Red Mullet with Estragon Sauce, Seafood Casserole "Livornese," Papardelle with Hare and Chianti Wine, Wild Boar with Polenta. Inaho Tei holds a golden eye snapper festival until today. Summer Palace celebrates the Dragon Boat Festival this month. Call 634-7373, 633-8888 local 2738/2739.

CASA Armas features Zarzuela de Mariscos, a Spanish dish in this month's Spanish Culinary Journey postcard. Zarzuela de Mariscos is a sea of flavors in tomato broth, gulf fish, salmon, clams, shrimp and mussels. As a special offer, get a soup with every order of Zarzuela de Mariscos upon presentation of your postcard. Call 897-3605 or 687-3370. Casa Armas Tapas Bar is on the 3/F Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center, Makati.

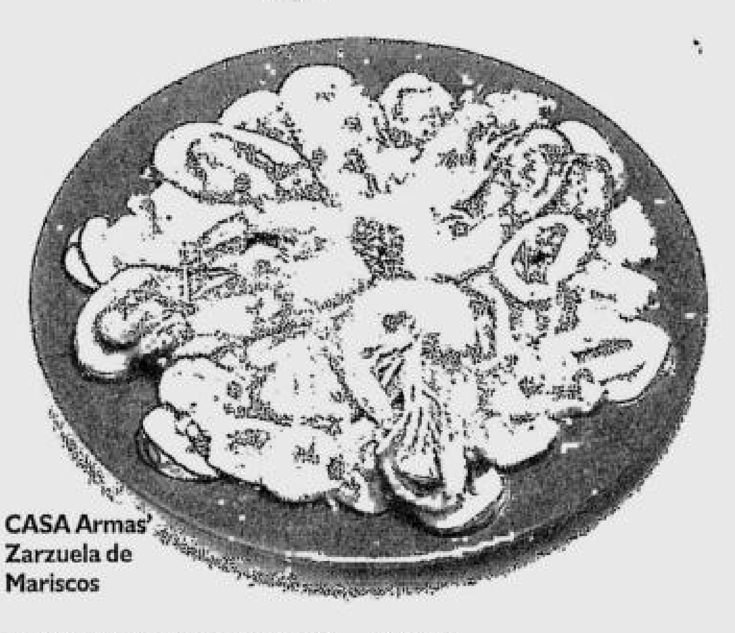
BLUE Bacon & Green Eggs starts off with Cream of Potatoes and Leeks with Crispy Bacon Bits soup. Roast Boneless Leg of Lamb with Baba Ganoush served with Herbed Rice and Baked Rolled Fillet of Lapu-Lapu stuffed with Spinach, Cheese and Almonds and smothered with Fresh Cream and served with Buttered Baby Potatoes with Parsley and String Beans with Garlic and Almonds are also served. For dessert, there are Amaretti Peach with Honey and Chocolate with a scoop of Vanilla Ice Cream. Blue Bacon & Green Eggs is at 27 Lantana and Boston Streets, New Manila, QC. Call 721-2717, 726-8054 and 721-7676. Blue Bacon Café has a new branch on the 3/F E-Square Building, Ortigas Avenue, Greenhills. Call 724-3902/3887.

TRADERS Café features a seafood buffet on Wednesday and Friday evenings. Guests may also partake of the restaurant's daily buffet breakfast and à la carte menus. Traders Café is open 6 a.m. to 12 a.m. Call 523-7011 local 2402.

T.G.I. Friday's, Italianni's and Outback recently launched its E-Club. Members are entitled to receive exclusive offers and freebies from restaurants. To join, visit the following websites and sign up: www.outback.com.ph; www.fridays.com.ph and www.italiannis.com.ph. Outback has branches at Libis, Glorietta 4 and Alabang Town Center. T.G.I. Friday's has branches at Glorietta 3, Alabang Town Center, Robinsons Place Manila, Sta. Lucia East and Hotel Rembrandt, QC. Italianni's has branches at Greenbelt 2, Glorietta 4, Alabang Town Center and SM City Bicutan.

POPEYE'S Chicken and Biscuits has New Orleans-style Fried Chicken, buttermilk biscuits, made even more memorable when accompanied by Louisiana side dishes: Cajun Rice, Red Beans and Rice, Coleslaw and Cajun Fries. You may order additional winners, including Mashed Potatoes, Red Beans and Rice, Cajun Rice and Coleslaw. Popeye, Olive and Brutus will appear at your party for free! Call 892-2371.

TASTE Buds, "The Food and Fun Republic" at Robinsons Place Manila, presents a musical featuring The Old School group as they sing a cappella versions of well-loved pop rock songs on May 23 and 30.



CASA Armas' Zarzuela de Mariscos

BROTHERS Burger presents many ways to enjoy a burger with its Brothers Suggestion. For May and June, Brothers Burger is promoting its Brothers Burger with Bacon, Mushroom and Cheese with a 16-oz glass of iced tea for P105. Brothers Burger has branches in Rockwell, Ortigas, Alabang, ABS-CBN, Pasong Tamo, Greenhills and Fort Bonifacio.

BLUE Bacon & Green Eggs' Roast Boneless Leg of Lamb with Baba Ganoush served with Herbed Rice

Catering seminar set

CATERERS, restaurateurs and others planning to start or manage a catering business are invited by ProActive Center for Training (PACT) to its Managing a Catering Business Seminar- Workshop until May 30, 2-6 p.m., at Sari - Sari Cafeteria, Eastwood City Walk, Eastwood City, Libis, QC.

Call 787-4370 or (0916) 822-6053. Only 20 participants will be accepted.

Seminar fee is P4,500, which includes a field trip to food and equipment suppliers and a restaurant visit, as well as manual and handouts, snacks, certificate of completion, and workshop materials and equipment.

The training will feature lectures and hands-on workshops on legal requirements; planning the menu, equipment and staffing; cost control; room arrangements; napkin folding and table skirting among others. Trainers are food-service consultants and professors of hotel and restaurant management.

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THIS summer, make sure to keep a stock of Glad wraps and bags for cookouts, reunions and leftovers by taking advantage of special discounts. A P10 discount is offered on Glad Zipper Freezer and Zipper Storage Bags in all major supermarkets nationwide until May 31. Zipper Freezer Bags can be used for freezing raw meat, poultry, seafood and even precooked food. Fruits, veggies and leftover items can be placed in the fridge in separate Zipper Storage Bags. The sturdy bags have a double lock to keep bacteria away.

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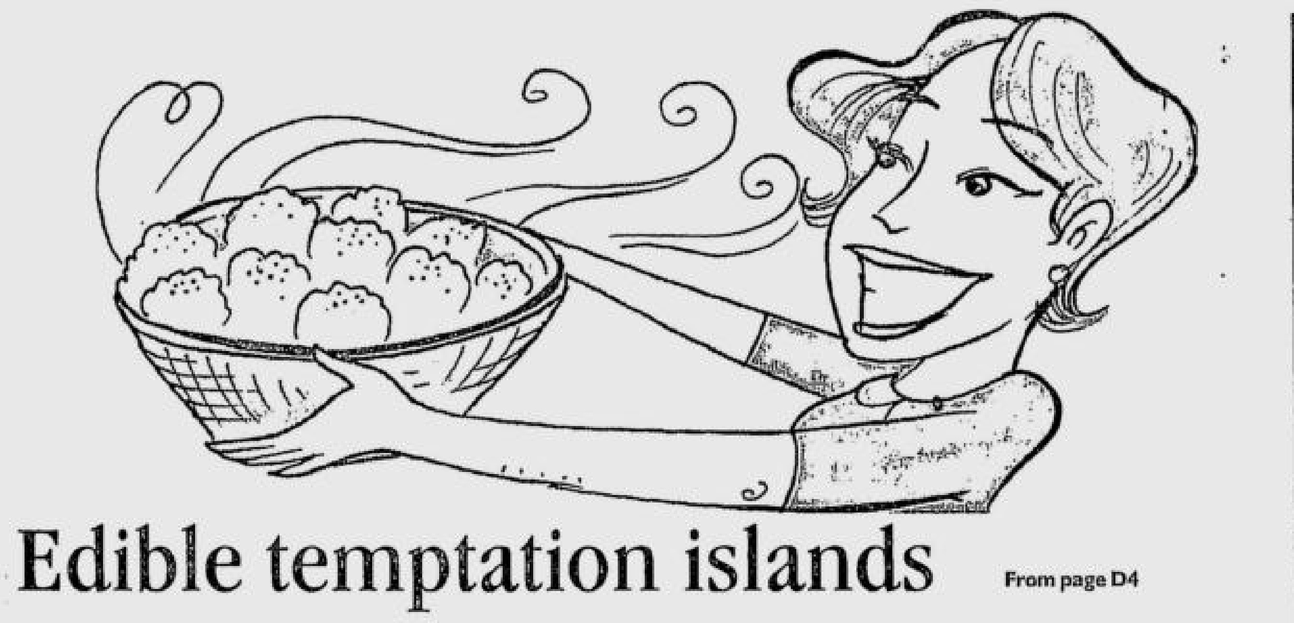


Edible temptation islands

From page D4

they decorate for statues of the Child Jesus and Archangel Michael. Since they consider themselves descendents of Noah, the use of *palutang* is a reminder, I suppose, of their having escaped the Great Flood. As *palitaw*, the preparation refers to the spiritual enlightenment necessary if they will be permitted to dance on a fire that they believe God makes special and unable to burn them.

"Sharing the altar space are steamed chicken, cooked rice, cigarettes, an alcoholic beverage like gin, popcorn, soft drinks, betelnut chew, *maruya* and biscuits shaped like horses and their riders.

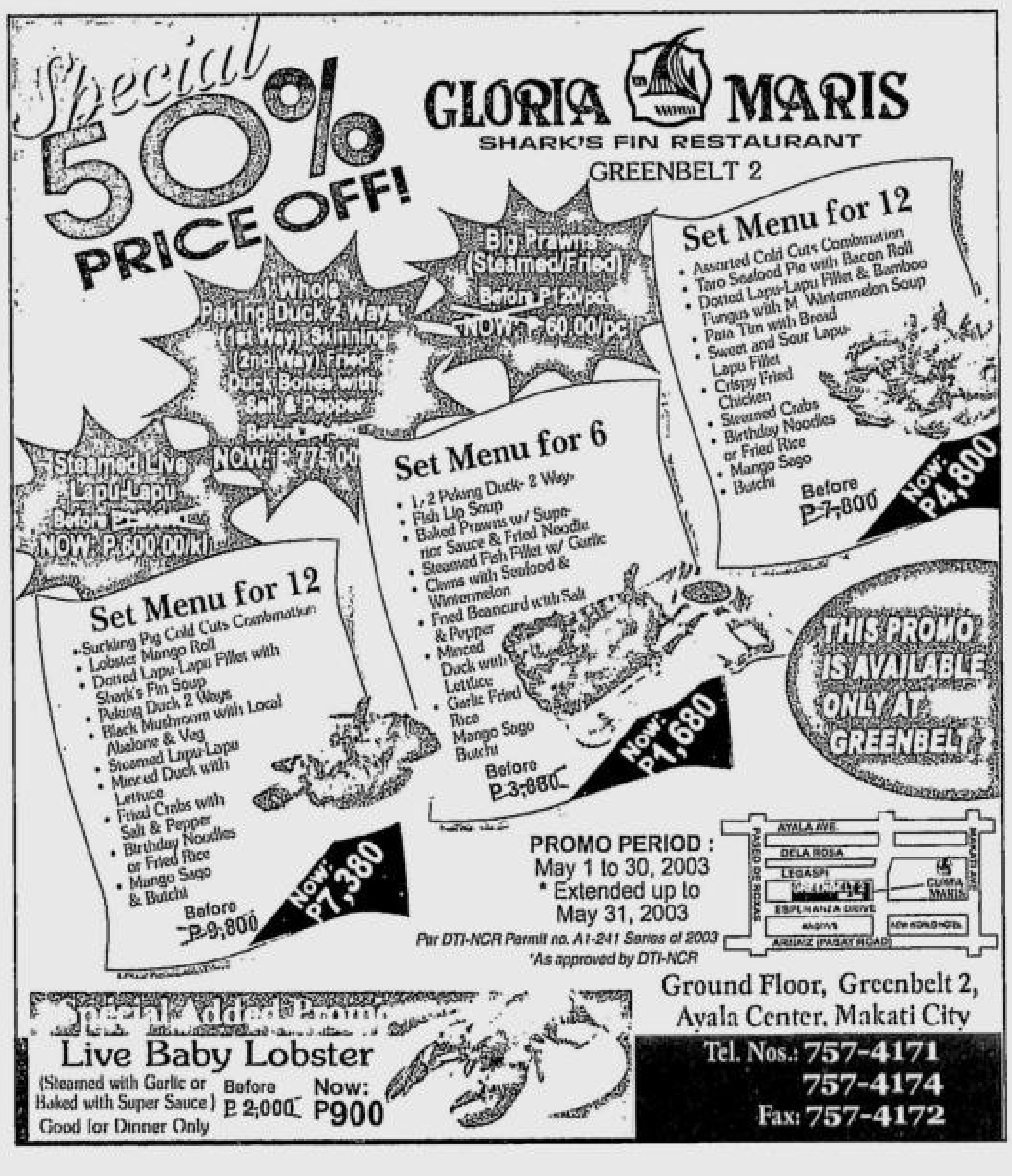
"To me *palutang* is the real floating island among all the ones around the world sharing the name. *Palutang* rise in the cooking water and float about once they are ready for serving," TJC said, as she tossed toasted sesame seeds in white sugar and put freshly grated coconut in a bowl as twin toppings for the islands.

"I remember that there is another boiled rice delicacy resembing *palitaw*. It's called *dila-dila*," said Saint Sandok. "They are smaller than *palitaw*. After the dough is shaped into thumb-size ovals, a thumb mark is left pressed into the center making it look like a tongue. In Ilocos, *dila-dila* is served with sugar and rasped coconut meat. In Panay, a brown sugar syrup substitutes for white sugar."

"Tingians use *dila-dila* in an exorcist ritual called *sinsinukat*," TJC noted. "I read in a book by Nid Anima that the ritual is supposed to rid school houses of a particular type of *anito*, a mysterious spirit that can turn bright pupils into dull-headed mutes."

Suddenly Sandok stopped listening when he saw The Joyful Cook remove the final batch of *palutang*. As TJC sprinkled each *palutang* with sweet toppings, the kitchen filled with friends who stopped by wondering what native tradition she was up to.

Next: Organic wedding receptions



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Edible temptation islands

THE JOYFUL COOK

Felice Prudente Sta. Maria

LAST night, The Joyful Cook prepared Floating Islands for the family's dessert by slowly poaching sweetened meringue in warm milk the old-fashioned way.

She could have made them another way. Chef Kasper of Seattle had taught her how to adapt the recipe for large crowds. He made "islands" of whipped egg whites by shaping them with an ice cream scoop, then steaming them.

Yolks became the sea: a custard made with thick cream flavored by vanilla bean. The Joyful Cook was fond of adding a lavish dose of Cointreau or Amadeus, then topping every island with paper-thin slivers of homemade candied orange peel and roasted almond slices.

Ile Flottante

"I really love Floating Islands," said TJC. "They're so easy to make and can be dressed up with spun sugar or caramel sauce if something fancy is really needed."

"What you made last night is called Floating Islands in the United States but Oleufs à la neige by the French. That means 'snow eggs.' The custard sauce is what they call Crème Anglaise, meaning English Cream. What they call Ile Flottante used to be made for great feasts. It is a Floating Island that was popular in the 17th century and into the reign of Britain's Queen Victoria," said Saint Sandok, TJC's talking spoon and kitchen companion inherited from Lola Uning.

"Was the island made of egg white?" TJC inquired.

"No. Layers of sponge cake steeped with kirsch and maraschino were held together by apricot jam that had been sprinkled with chopped blanched almonds and currants. The tower-island was frosted with whipped cream then served surrounded by a lake of chilled vanilla custard or a purée of strawberry or raspberry," said Sandok, as he remembered how Filipina graduates of Le Cordon Bleu in the time of Rizal made the dessert.

"The island was supposed to glide about on the 'water,' so sometimes the tower sat on a fruit purée mixed with a little cream, thereby making it more agile."

> Every cuisine has its version of the floating dessert; ours are 'palitaw' and 'palutang,' which are considered good-luck food

ILLUSTRATIONS: STEPH BRAVO

Filipino versions

"I hope you will make Philippine floating islands for today's *merienda*," Sandok continued.

"Of course, I won't disappoint you. Here is our glutinous rice flour. I am already making it into a batter with water. Our ocean is already boiling in the pot," said TJC.

"In Cavite we don't only call what we're going to eat *palutang*—meaning 'to float.' Another name for it is *palitaw* from the rootword *litaw*, meaning 'to appear' and 'to shine.' That's why *palitaw* and *palutang* are considered good-luck food. In Alfonso, Cavite, where Fire Waltzers live, *palitaw* is the special food for New Year, Christmas, the fourth day after a death, and the ninth day after a sick person gets well. In Pampanga, the rice delicacy is called *pepalto*," Sandok reminded.

"The Fire Waltzers, who dance on glowing embers and through knee-high flames without getting injured, require *palutang* on the altars

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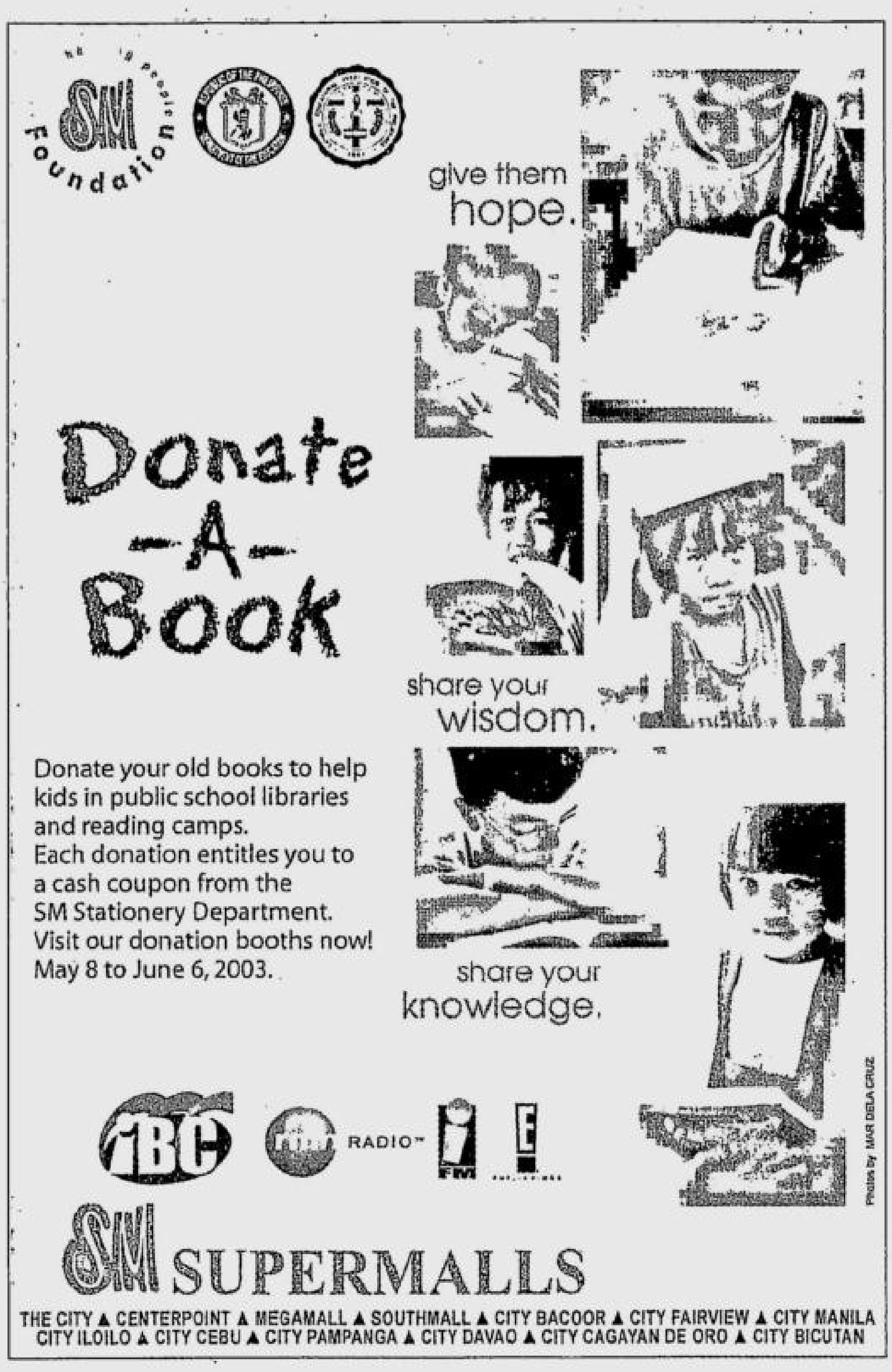

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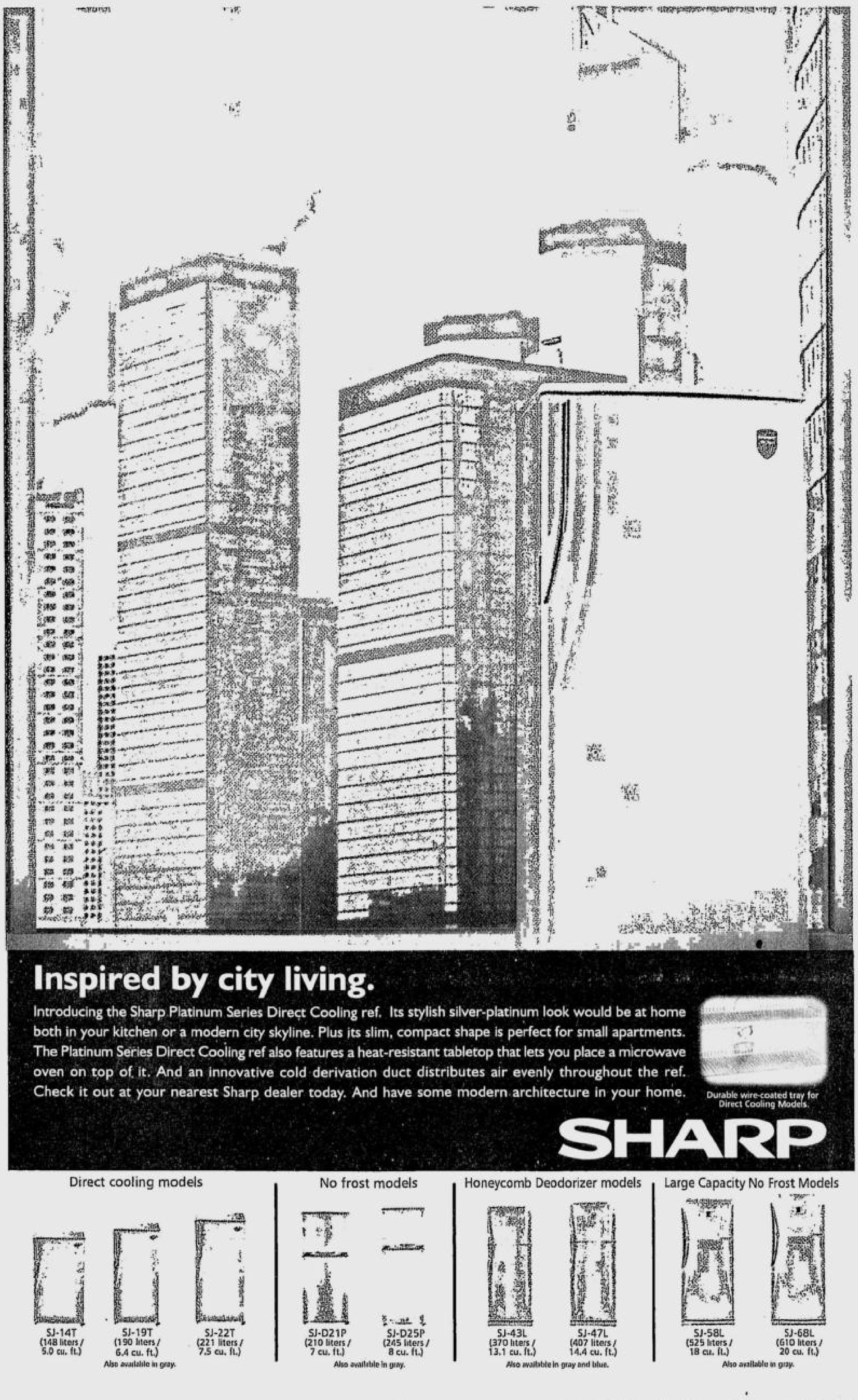

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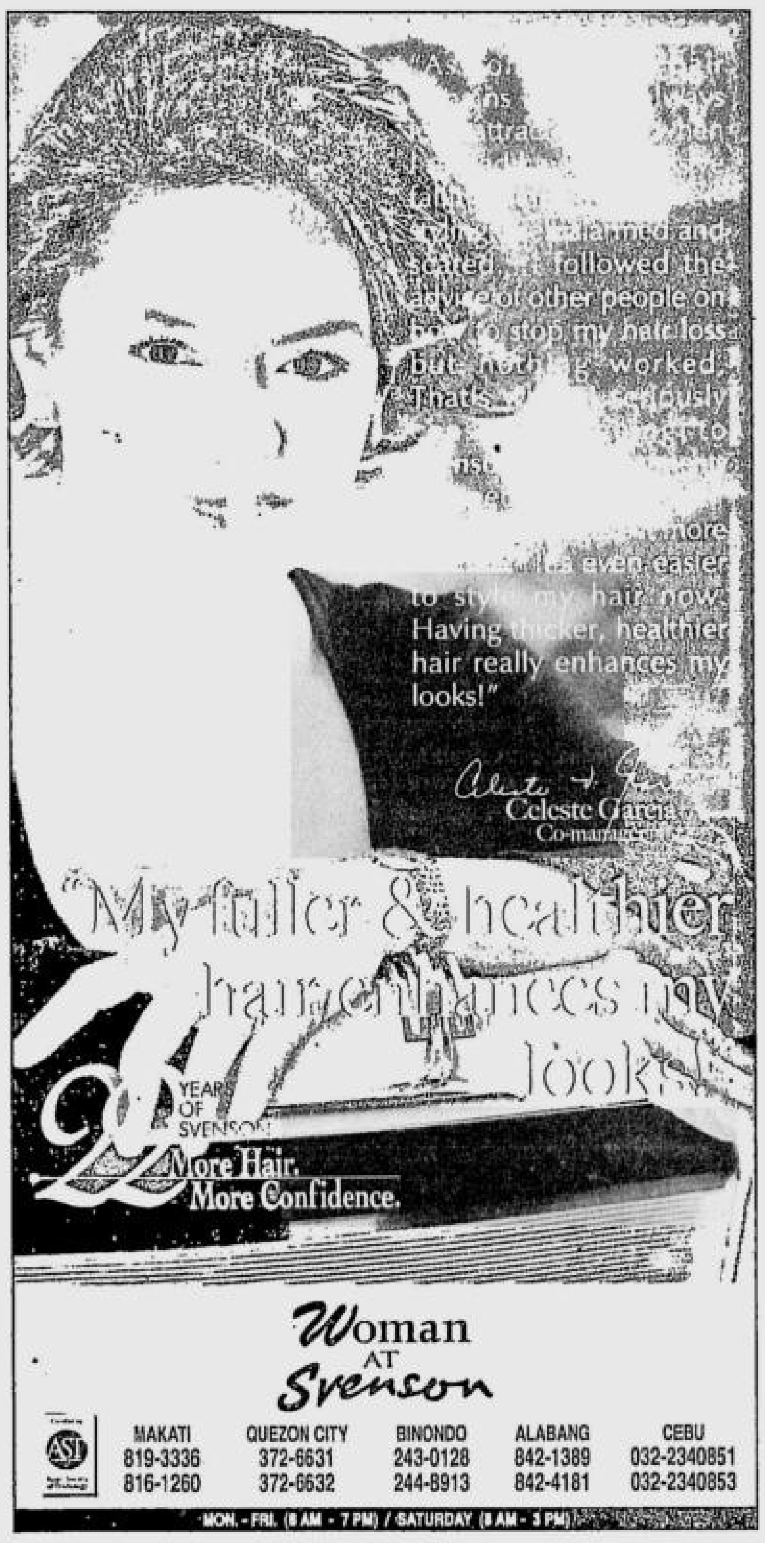
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